LEADERSHIP IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY AND NORTH AFRICA: HISTORICAL STUDIES IN MISSION COMMAND

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Military History

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2013-01

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	**2. REPORT TYPE**	**3. DATES COVERED** *(From - To)*
14-06-2013	Master's Thesis	AUG 2012 – JUN 2013

4. Title and Subtitle

Leadership in the Shenandoah Valley and North Africa: Historical Studies in Mission Command

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)

Colin P. Mahle, Major, US Army

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

Mission command, as outlined in Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command*, is the contemporary philosophy through which army commanders combine mission, intent, and subordinate initiative to win in unified land operations. Though not known to them as mission command, prominent leaders such as Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and Major General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson used similar concepts.

This study specifically examines how these leaders employed three of the six principles outlined in current mission command doctrine. They are: (1) build cohesive teams through mutual trust, (2) exercise disciplined initiative, and (3) provide a clear commander's intent. Determining the methods that these commanders employed during their celebrated campaigns through the framework of mission command highlights characteristics that will benefit military leaders at all levels. The linkages between these historical campaigns and current mission command philosophy are the focus of this study.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Mission Command, Civil War, World War II, Leadership Studies

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**			**19b. PHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)*
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	153	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

LEADERSHIP IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY AND NORTH AFRICA: HISTORICAL STUDIES IN MISSION COMMAND, by Major Colin P. Mahle, 153 pages.

Mission command, as outlined in Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command*, is the contemporary philosophy through which army commanders combine mission, intent, and subordinate initiative to win in unified land operations. Though not known to them as mission command, prominent leaders such as Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and Major General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson used similar concepts.

This study specifically examines how these leaders employed three of the six principles outlined in current mission command doctrine. They are: (1) build cohesive teams through mutual trust, (2) exercise disciplined initiative, and (3) provide a clear commander’s intent. Determining the methods that these commanders employed during their celebrated campaigns through the framework of mission command highlights characteristics that will benefit military leaders at all levels. The linkages between these historical campaigns and current mission command philosophy are the focus of this study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are a number of people I would like to thank for their assistance and support during the completion of this study.

First, I would like to thank my loving wife Charlsey and my daughter Claire for their unending devotion, understanding, and patience along this journey. Without their acceptance of my passion for history, this would not have been possible. I would also like to thank my parents for teaching me that through hard work and dedication I can always achieve my goals. This advice has helped me accomplish many things in life.

Second, I would like to thank my thesis committee, Dr. Ethan S. Rafuse, Mr. Jeffrey D. Brown and Mr. Matthew K. Green. At times, my thoughts were unclear and imprecise. Your constant feedback and guidance has helped me to discern the important lessons of this study. This process, combined with the curriculum at CGSC, has helped me grow professionally into a field grade officer prepared to meet the challenges of the modern battlefield.

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ACRONYMS

ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
U.S.	United States
VMI	Virginia Military Institute

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Mission command is the contemporary philosophy through which army commanders combine mission, intent, and subordinate initiative to win in unified land operations. It is the guiding doctrine that advocates a shared understanding of the commander's intent while fostering trust in junior leaders to implement decentralized decision making during the execution of operations. The principles of mission command have been proven generally effective over more than a century of warfare. Though not known to them as mission command, prominent leaders such as Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and Major General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson used similar concepts. Their integration of these techniques led to varying levels of success during their campaigns. Determining the methods that these commanders employed during their celebrated campaigns through the framework of mission command, will highlight characteristics that will benefit military leaders at all levels. The linkages between these historical campaigns and current mission command philosophy are the focus of this study.[1]

The Valley Campaign, 1862

Major General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson was appointed commander of the Valley District, Department of Northern Virginia in October 1861. In this position he was directly subordinate to General Joseph E. Johnston, the overall Confederate field commander in Northern Virginia. Promoted from division command, Jackson had the

[1]Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2012), v.

task of securing the Shenandoah Valley against larger Federal armies and preventing them from reinforcing Union columns operating against Richmond. In March to June 1862, Jackson crisscrossed the valley, leading an outnumbered force, thwarting several Union operations. His exploits became one of the most famous and studied campaigns in American history. Jackson's ability to use his force to achieve strategic victories through tactical actions makes his generalship worthy of study.[2]

The North Africa Campaign 1941-1943

In February 1941, following success as a division commander during the invasion of France, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was selected to take command of German forces that would become the Afrika Korps (*Deutsches Afrikakorps*). Adolf Hitler personally selected him based of his abilities shown during World War I and reconfirmed during the invasion of France in 1940. His task was to reinforce Germany's Italian allies, who had been severely beaten and driven out of Egypt by the British. Rommel used a coalition of German and Italian troops to conduct extended operations for nearly two years through Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia. Although successful in achieving regional objectives in the short term, Rommel was unable to link his tactical success to advance the greater German strategic objectives from 1941 to 1943. Ultimately, Rommel's triumphs, like all other German operations, dissolved under the combination of resource limitations and pressure from Allied Forces.[3]

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[2]Peter Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862: Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 15-17.

[3]David Fraser, *Knight's Cross: A Life of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel* (New York, Harper Collins Publishing, 1995), 213-16.

Review of Major Literature

The military history of the American Civil War has been extensively examined from nearly every angle, in works ranging from detailed battle descriptions to the study of important leaders. American and international historians remain fascinated with the struggle that ripped apart the nation from 1861 to 1865. The Valley Campaign of 1862 has been widely surveyed and scrutinized because of the remarkable exploits by a revered Confederate leader. Many details of the campaign can be obtained through reports in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, or *Official Records*, which contain combat reports and expansive correspondence. They remain the definitive primary source of material for any Civil War study, but are presented without analysis or commentary.[4] In addition, there are a number of published first hand staff officer accounts, such as Henry Kyd Douglas' *I Rode With Stonewall* and *Make Me a Map of the Valley* by Jedediah Hotchkiss. Although these provide historical context, in some cases their dedication to the cause kept objectivity comparatively low.[5]

There have been a number of compilations of wartime letters that lend themselves to better understanding of individual perspectives. Such is the case with *The Wartime*

[4]U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901).

[5]Henry Kyd Douglas, *I Rode With Stonewall* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1976); Jedediah Hotchkiss, *Make Me a Map of the Valley: The Civil War Journal of Stonewall Jackson's Topographer* (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1973).

Letters of Robert E. Lee, edited by Clifford Dowdey and Louis H. Manarin.[6] Although these letters provide interesting insights into Lee's relationships with Confederate leaders and politicians, current army doctrine was unavailable as a framework to analyze these interactions. Recently, Donald C. Pfanz edited a previously unpublished group of letters entitled, *The Letters of General Richard S. Ewell*.[7] While Pfanz offers quality dialogue and historical notes in addition to the letters, he did not analyze how Ewell's leadership qualities directly related to his military operations. In addition, the letters encompass his entire adult life and offer only a small glimpse into his relationship with Jackson during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign.

In recent decades, a number of complete biographies on Thomas J. Jackson have been written. The best of these is James I. Robertson, Jr.'s *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend*. Robertson's exhaustive account describes Jackson's hardships and lessons from West Point through his death at the Battle of Chancellorsville in 1863.[8] Additionally, examinations of the Valley Campaign exist, such as Peter Cozzens's *Shenandoah 1862: Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign*, which gives a balanced and detailed account of actions during the campaign. Although these works outline many

[6]Clifford Dowdey and Louis H. Manarin, eds., *The Wartime Papers of Robert E. Lee* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1961).

[7]Donald C. Pfanz, ed., *The Letters of General Richard S. Ewell* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012).

[8]James I. Robertson Jr., *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1997).

specifics, they did not have the recently adopted mission command philosophy to evaluate Jackson's leadership traits.[9]

Likewise, World War II has many published accounts depicting events that spanned the globe. Erwin Rommel, as one of the key German military leaders, has numerous works dedicated to his achievements throughout France and North Africa. The mystique of the German Afrika Korps has captured audiences almost continuously since 1945. The preeminent biography of Rommel's life is David Fraser's *Knight's Cross: A Life of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel*. This study outlines Rommel's life during both World Wars through his forced suicide in 1944.[10] The North Africa Campaign also has many respected works such as Desmond Young's *Rommel, The Desert Fox: The Classic Biography of the Legendary Leader of Germany's Afrika Korps*. Although insightful, the fact that it was written in 1950 does not allow enough time separation for proper reflection and analysis.[11] More recently published, *The Foxes of The Desert*, by Paul Carell offers a well-rounded discussion of both Axis and Allied perspectives in North Africa, but does not conduct analysis centered on military doctrinal framework.[12]

There also exist a number of primary accounts from leaders who were present for the North Africa Campaign. Field Marshal Albert Kesselring published his memoirs

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[9]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*.

[10]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*.

[11]Desmond Young, *Rommel, The Desert Fox: The Classic Biography of the Legendary Leader of Germany's Afrika Korps* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1978).

[12]Paul Carell, *The Foxes of the Desert*, trans. Mervyn Savill (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1961).

entitled: *The Memoirs of Field Marshal Kesselring.*[13] Likewise, Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery's personal diaries and correspondence were published in, *Montgomery and the Eighth Army*.[14] These present intimate details of the campaigns, but both remain unable to describe personal leadership traits of Rommel and their effect on his operations. The book that comes closest to analyzing the principles of mission command and their effect on operational events is Dennis E. Showalter's, *Patton and Rommel: Men of War in the Twentieth Century*. This study is a dual military biography that discusses leadership principles, but is largely focused around comparing the political and military differences present in the greater German and American systems.[15]

The most useful published primary source is Rommel's own papers. They were written during the campaign in preparation for a book focused on operational lessons of World War II combat. These writings show Rommel's intimate thoughts and the decision making methods he used in North Africa. The manuscripts were compiled by his son and now exist in *The Rommel Papers*, edited by B.H. Liddell Hart. Although these accounts highlight Rommel's sentiments and relay many specifics during the campaign, they fail to outline specific leadership traits through the contemporary framework of mission command philosophy.[16]

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[13]Albert Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field Marshal Kesselring* (Navato, CA: Presidio Press, 1989).

[14]Bernard Law Montgomery, *Montgomery and the Eighth Army*, ed. Stephen Brooks (London: Bodley Head, 1991).

[15]Dennis E. Showalter, *Patton and Rommel: Men of War in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 2005).

[16]Erwin Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, ed. B. H. Liddell Hart, trans. Paul Findlay (New York: De Capo Press, 1953).

Primary Research Questions

Research Question 1: What elements of mission command are evident in how Major General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson and Field Marshal Erwin Rommel exercised command during their most celebrated campaigns: the Valley Campaign of 1862 and North Africa Campaign of 1941 to 1943?

Research Question 2: Did they achieve success or failure in these campaigns in part by using or not using these elements?

Limitations

There are two limitations to consider in this analysis. The first, and most obvious, is that this study uses a modern doctrinal structure to examine historical campaigns that had no links to the current mission command philosophy outlined in Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command*. In both cases, there were significant differences between this philosophy and Confederate and German Army doctrine and techniques. The second is that the current philosophy of mission command contains six principles that are outlined in chapter 2. Due to constraints, this study analyzed the three most important principles: (1) build cohesive teams through mutual trust, (2) exercise disciplined initiative, and (3) provide a clear commander's intent. By focusing on only three principles, there were other aspects of the mission command philosophy that were left unexamined.[17]

[17]Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 1-3.

Structure

Chapter 2 will discuss the history of mission command philosophy from its roots in nineteenth century Prussia through its impact on current mission command doctrine as outlined in ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command*. The chapter highlights the forces that generated reformist thought and led to a preference for decentralized decision making and junior leader empowerment. Chapter 3 focuses on the Valley Campaign of 1862, and analyzes Jackson's use of mission command principles. The chapter shows Jackson's evolution as an independent military commander who was required to make decisions that affected Confederate strategic objectives. Chapter 4 focuses on the North Africa Campaign of 1941 to 1943, and likewise analyzes Rommel's development throughout the campaign. Chapter 5 examines both campaigns to identify trends and offer perspectives about how mission command principles were used to achieve success and what these lessons mean for modern military leaders charged with executing operations.

Significance of the Study

Both of the campaigns examined in this study have been analyzed for decades from nearly every angle. The findings have informed the thinking of generations of military leaders about battlefield conduct at the tactical and operational levels of war. This study uses the philosophy of mission command to gain a better understanding of what individual leadership principles were evident during these campaigns and to evaluate their effectiveness to inform future military leaders.

CHAPTER 2

THE EVOLUTION OF MISSION COMMAND

For centuries commanders have attempted to manage chaos on the battlefield by balancing direct control and delegation within their formations. While direct control is the most structured method for decision making, it inhibits initiative at the lowest levels. As armies and technology advanced over time, commanders who employed centralized authority were increasingly unable to react to rapidly changing circumstances. The roots of the mission command philosophy stemmed from the realization, by some, that decentralized initiative by empowered leaders was the most effective method for conducting warfare in the modern age. Although mission command philosophy has developed over time, the concept of encouraging initiative through a shared understanding of commander's intent has remained since its inception.[18]

The early nineteenth century saw many changes occur from a military and social perspective. Enlightenment thought produced reformist writings such as those of the French military theorist Jacques Antoine Hippolyte, Comte de Guibert. In his essays, written in the 1770s, Guibert articulated his thoughts on battlefield tactics as well as the shift toward nationalist tendencies in Europe. Although a contemporary of Frederick the Great, he had significantly less military command experience. Guibert advocated modification to contemporary military structure. From a social perspective, Guibert thought armies should be comprised of empowered citizen soldiers. Although skeptical this would ever take place, Guibert believed harnessing nationalist sentiment from

[18]Ibid.

citizens would add strength to the army. He also thought fortifications and siege warfare were costly and largely obsolete. Guibert advocated the maneuver of division sized columns that allowed for rapid battlefield employment. Over the next two decades, the French and Napoleonic Revolutions caused many of Guibert's theories to materialize throughout Europe.[19]

Enlightenment ideals had also eroded longstanding social views concerning the size and disposition of an army. These notions coupled with the social change brought about by the French Revolution paved the way for larger nationalist driven armies. Fueled by this nationalist sentiment, these armies now consisted of, and fought for, the entire nation. However, this social transformation equated to larger formations, which in turn required more decentralized command and control practices to enable successful battlefield employment.[20]

The shock of Napoleon's defeat of Prussia at the Battles of Jena-Auerstadt in 1806 led to a fundamental shift in thinking. These defeats left Prussia firmly in the hands of the French and became a significant catalyst for driving military change. The years following Jena-Auerstadt gave Prussia an opportunity to leverage national sentiment in response to the social and military changes. This intellectual shift was carried forward by the Prussian Army, who began to shed the practices of Frederick the Great concerning

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[19]R. R. Palmer, "Frederick the Great, Guibert, Bulow: From Dynamics to National War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 107-11.

[20]MacGregor Knox, "Mass Politics and Nationalism as Military Revolution: The French Revolution and After," in *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050*, ed. MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2001), 67-68.

rigid and centralized command and control structures. Although these principles served them well before 1789, they were built upon a smaller structure, mainly focused on limited regional objectives. In addition, Frederick the Great was known to all as a gifted tactician able to expertly conceptualize his campaigns without a requirement for staff officers or deputies.[21] The challenge of the Napoleonic battlefield demanded a broader and more developed approach to command and control to achieve success. States could no longer rely on simple military genius alone.[22]

The decades following the Napoleonic Wars were a time of reflection for much of Europe. Significant changes in warfare had appeared and long held martial principles seemed to require restructuring. Increasingly larger nationalist armies campaigned over greater distances and incurred more casualties than previously experienced. These massive forces necessitated the adoption of the corps structure. Napoleon first formed these permanent organizations within his *Grand Armee* as subordinate elements capable of independent maneuver but mutually supportive during battle. This structure enabled better organizational control, but geographically dispersed and decentralized elements.[23] Many European military leaders felt that these massive formations had caused war to become uncontrollable. They believed that these large conscript armies reduced

[21]Palmer, "Frederick the Great," 96-97.

[22]Knox, "Mass Politics and Nationalism," 69-70.

[23]Peter Paret, "Napoleon and the Revolution in War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 125.

effectiveness and thus demanded a return to smaller, high quality forces, more easily managed and controlled.[24]

Within Prussian leadership, General Gerhard von Scharnhorst and Field Marshal August Neidhardt von Gneisenau were the key facilitators of the military transformation. Both men understood the implications of the broader social revolution and leveraged the same sentiments in Prussia. As Chief of Staff of the Prussian Army, Scharnhorst saw that professional training of officers, combined with German national appeal, were key components to match French mobilization. In response, Scharnhorst advocated for an army of increased quality, capable of achieving limited objectives, while able to be supplemented by *Landwehr* (Defense of the Country) units. Both Scharnhorst and Gneisenau aspired to achieve a quality army that valued education and meritocracy in the officer corps over noble lineage. As a result, the Prussian officer corps was opened to all classes in 1806 and the Prussian Military Academy (*Kriegsakademie)* began instructing selected junior officers who demonstrated potential for complex military thought in 1810. Graduates comprised the nucleus of the new Prussian General Staff corps that not only assisted commanders with campaign planning, but were highly skilled and respected technicians. Prussian General Staff officers were trusted and empowered to make decisions in a way unfamiliar to contemporary western militaries.[25] Gneisenau advanced reformist ideals following Scharnhorst's death in 1813. He implemented many changes

[24]Dennis E. Showalter, "The Prusso-German RMA, 1840-1871," in *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050,* eds. MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2001), 92-95.

[25]Hajo Holborn, "The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age,* ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 283-84.

on the battlefield as Chief of Staff to Field Marshal Gebhard Leberecht von Blucher, Prince of Wahlstadt, contributing to victory at the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June 1815.[26]

Another Prussian officer that played an important role during this transition period was Carl von Clausewitz. Being a veteran of the Napoleonic campaigns, Clausewitz was well acquainted with Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. His experiences led him to similar conclusions about the changing face of warfare. In his book, *On War*, Clausewitz emphasized how fog and friction on the battlefield produced unforecasted situations and results.[27] This required modifications to rigid command and control structures, to allow decentralized decision making when this friction occurred. Clausewitz saw war as a violent human endeavor that could not be won by executing prescribed military maneuvers. There was no formula that guaranteed success or failure. The Clausewitzian model described how the modern battlefield required professionally trained officers to manage chaos and respond to unplanned events. Clausewitz, a graduate of the *Kriegsakademie* in 1804, knew the benefit that these trained general staff officers would have on operations.[28]

Although many supported the changes being implemented, the reformation did have its opponents. Following peace in 1815, some feared a shift away from noble control of the army, threatened Prussian noble lineage and tradition. This sentiment,

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[26]Ibid., 281-83.

[27]Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 8.

[28]Peter Paret, "Clausewitz," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 189, 199.

combined with the concern of uncontrollable armies, led to a more conservative emotion regaining favor within Prussia. As a result, the reforms advocated by Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were not implemented as fully as they had desired. Likewise, Clausewitz was scrutinized for his reformist support and relegated to nonessential staff positions, such as the Director of the Prussian War College in Berlin, for the remainder of his career.[29]

Nonetheless, the Prussian General Staff achieved a respected position in the Prussian Army. Subsequent chiefs of staff continued to build upon the solid foundation of the general staff corps. Helmuth von Moltke became the Chief of the Prussian General Staff in the years leading up to the German Wars of Unification. In these conflicts, Prussia's ability to quickly defeat Austria in the Seven Weeks' War and France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 to 1871 validated the reforms, which gave Prussia and later Germany a marked advantage over its adversaries. As the decisive battle of the Seven Weeks' War, the Battle of Koniggratz, fought on 3 July 1866, was important because it witnessed the slaughter of massed columns of Austrians at the hands of empowered Prussian units. The Industrial Revolution had allowed the mass production of advanced weaponry capable of lethality at extended range. Prussia understood that capitalizing on this technical innovation required that tactical units employ maneuver and dispersion instead of sluggish, massed formations. Koniggratz also showed that although technological advances were important, battlefield chaos demanded that initiative and decision making be exercised at the lowest level to maximize firepower at the decisive

[29]Ibid., 195-97.

point.[30] At nearly the same time, many of these same technological advances compelled Jackson to use mission command principles to command his forces in the Shenandoah Valley.

The increased complexity brought by railroads and the telegraph, as products of the Industrial Revolution, made planning a vital skill for Prussian commanders. Industrialization was vital to modern warfare, but required proper control be implemented in order to effectively harness these technological advancements.[31] Moltke advocated for improved methods of control and combined this bureaucratization with trusted professional staffs that paid dividends on the modern industrial battlefield. Although modernization was achieved with regard to harnessing industry and professional military education, changes in military doctrine were not yet complete.[32]

Moltke understood that battlefield influences from industrialization required modifications to existing tactical doctrine. The German General Staff corps provided better quality leadership, but doctrine had not kept pace with the increased capabilities available to German commanders. As part of the conceptual doctrine change, the German Army began advocating the use of decentralized tactics incorporating skirmishers in support of maneuver formations. Known as *Jager* Battalions, they allowed units to maximize the firepower of rifled small arms by dispersion, but required that small unit

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[30]Samuel J. Lewis, "Koniggratz," in U.S. Army Command and General Staff College *H100 Book of Readings* (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, June 2012), 348-49.

[31]Dennis E. Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles*: *Soldiers, Technology, and the Unification of Germany* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1976), 42-46.

[32]Showalter, "The Prusso-German RMA," 102-03.

leaders employ these tactics using initiative.[33] The *Jager* tradition originated during Frederick the Great's time as special Light Infantry units comprised of expert marksman, but only a small number of these *Jager* units were present in the Prussian Army. However, the development of more lethal weaponry, as a product of the Industrial Revolution, made the concept more useful and led to increased *Jager* employment during the years surrounding the German Wars of Unification.[34]

Moltke was one of the first to attempt to address the decentralized shift within tactical doctrine and make improvements applicable at all levels of the army. He advocated a shared understanding of the intent of the mission and independent action by junior leaders. Moltke declared, "Diverse are the situations under which an officer has to act on the basis of his own view of the situation. It would be wrong if he had to wait for orders at times when no orders can be given. But most productive are his actions when he acts within the framework of his senior commander's intent."[35] In his view, by communicating the operational objectives to junior leaders and encouraging initiative, punctual decision making would maintain momentum. Initially these ideas met resistance

[33]Ibid., 109-110.

[34]Bruce I. Gudmundsson, "Maneuver Warfare: The German Tradition," in *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology*, ed. Richard D. Hooker (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1993), 281-84.

[35]Werner Widder, Maj. Gen, "*Auftragstaktik* and *Innere Fuhrung*: Trademarks of German Leadership," *Military Review* (September-October 2002): 3-9, repr. in U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, *H501 Readings* (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, October 2012), H501RA-2.

from more detail oriented leaders who felt this doctrine would undermine discipline and not allow management by senior leadership.[36]

Although Moltke's leadership philosophy did not retain a specific name, the concept later gained the contemporary term *Auftragstaktik*, defined broadly as "mission type orders." This philosophy was infused into the German ranks and became a valuable addition to their military structure. These changes were obvious to outsiders that witnessed the efficiency of the German model during the mid-nineteenth century. A Russian General who had observed the Franco-Prussian War described his experience by saying, "At the root of the German victory is an unbelievable readiness to act independently, a readiness displayed at all levels down to the very lowest and displayed on the battlefield as well as in other matters."[37] Moltke's successful integration of *Auftragstaktik* principles into military doctrine became central to German leadership philosophy well into the twentieth century.

Germany's experience in the initial years of World War I demanded organizational change. Although the initial 1914 offensive into France was successful, by 1915 the front had become largely static and Germany was unable to sustain heavy losses from extended exposure to artillery and trench warfare. German resources were being depleted and they were unable to continue a war of attrition against larger, well resourced, Allied armies. Germany needed to change its tactics in order to gain an advantage and break the trench warfare stalemate. In response, Chief of the General Staff

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[36]Ibid.

[37]Franz Uhle-Wettler, "*Auftragstaktik*: Mission Orders and the German Experience," in *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology,* ed. Richard D. Hooker (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1993), 240-42.

General Erich von Falkenhayn was replaced by Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, who appointed Lieutenant General Erich Ludendorff as his Deputy. Under Ludendorff's direction, divisional Infantry organizations were restructured and reporting requirements were streamlined. The creation of specialized Infantry units, known as Storm Trooper Battalions (*sturmbataillon*), added a new capability to German commanders. These elite units were trained with special weapons and used for exploiting initial success into enemy rear areas. Their training advocated small unit leadership and decision making at the lowest levels. In addition, to maximize unit effectiveness, tactical doctrine was rewritten and frontline combat training schools were established that trained small unit leaders. These organizational and doctrinal changes highlight Germany's use of decentralized decision making and small unit leadership, in response to the static problem of trench warfare.[38]

The new organizational and leadership doctrine was tested during the German offensives in 1918. Although attack synchronization was managed at high levels, once the offensive began it was dependent upon leaders at the battalion level and below to exploit ruptured enemy lines by attacking rear areas. This forced junior leaders to exercise initiative once opportunities arose. Although Ludendorff had orchestrated changes in doctrine and organization at the tactical level, he failed to outline larger operational objectives beyond the immediate success achieved by these specialized assault troops. German units successfully implemented the tactical doctrine effectively, but irreplaceable losses and intervention by the United States (U.S.) ultimately combined

[38]Timothy P. Lupfer, *The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes of German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War*, Leavenworth Paper No. 4 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1981), 19, 23-24.

to destroy German morale and set the conditions for successful Allied counterattacks during the summer of 1918.[39]

The small German Army saw many changes as a result of the Versailles Treaty in 1919. The treaty mandated that the German *Reichswehr* (Reich Defense) be limited to 100,000 men, including 4,000 officers, and outlawed the general staff. Although limited by this regulation, General Hans von Seeckt, as Chief of the Troop Office, saw the value of capturing the lessons from World War I and established multiple committees to study the campaigns. These lessons informed the development of German doctrine during the interwar years and facilitated Germany's successful innovation during the years prior to World War II. Although Seeckt retained a restricted force, through doctrine development and focused training the German military culture continued to empower flexible and adaptive junior leaders.[40]

Employing the principles of *Auftragstaktik* during the German victories over Poland in 1939 and France in 1940 again validated their effectiveness. German units rapidly attacked into France and produced a *Bewegungskrieg*, or war of movement, that French units were unprepared to meet.[41] The German focus on high quality and trained formations enabled them to defeat poorly led and ill-equipped French units. Their

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[39]Williamson A. Murray, "The West at War," in *The Cambridge History of Warfare*, ed. Geoffrey Parker (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 303-05.

[40]Williamson A. Murray, "The World in Conflict," in *The Cambridge History of Warfare*, ed. Geoffrey Parker (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 315-16.

[41]Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 287-88.

doctrine of decentralized decision making, coupled with new panzer formations, enabled the German war machine to maintain momentum throughout their initial campaigns in central Europe from 1939 to 1941.[42]

In contrast, the French armies defending their eastern borders in 1940 were led by generals who employed detailed command and control techniques to govern vast quantities of men and material. While Germany developed doctrine for high quality formations, France assumed lower quality units and developed doctrine that was suited for controlling a conscript army, which mobilized largely for defensive operations. In keeping with this model, subordinate commanders were not given flexibility to make decisions based on experience and changing events. These doctrinal concepts were residual tactics from World War I. In the French model, increased firepower made rigid control even more important. In addition, the French high command did not embrace Clausewitzian concepts concerning unavoidable chaos of the battlefield. Instead, they fought with centrally managed units with little room for initiative. This centralized control, combined with piecemeal armor employment, inferior communications, and bad luck, contributed to France's capitulation.[43] The German armored spearhead, General Heinz Guderian's XIX Panzer Corps, moved through the Ardennes Forest and rapidly pierced the French defenses at Sedan in May 1940. Other German formations, such as Rommel's 7th Panzer Division, exploited the initial breach in French defenses to the

[42]Robert Allen Doughty, "The Breaking Point: Sedan and the Fall of France, 1940" (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1990), excerpt reprinted in U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, *H501 Readings* (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, October 2012), H501RC-4.

[43]Ibid., H501RC-1.

north. German leaders empowered with *Auftragstaktik* successfully integrated *Luftwaffe* assets and quickly overcame French resistance in a matter of weeks.[44]

Contemporary U.S. doctrine and organization has many ties to these Prussian and German lessons from the century following the Napoleonic Wars. The concept that professional staff officers are needed to manage a complex battlefield was embraced as a framework for all U.S. Military formations in the late nineteenth century. The creation of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, as the School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry in 1881, integrated professional military education in the officer corps. Similar in nature to the *Kriegsakademie*, U.S. officers received professional military education in such subjects as geography, history, and field fortifications to better prepare them for planning and executing military operations.[45] Within the modern U.S. Military, a unit staff is not only responsible for planning, they are a central component of decision making. The staff is integral to a commander's ability to manage units effectively both in garrison and during combat operations. As outlined in ADRP 5-0, *The Operations Process*, "The staff's role is to assist commanders with understanding

[44]John Gordon, "A Fatal First: Joint Operations on the Meuse," *Field Artillery Journal* (March-April 1985): 29-31. Reprinted in U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, *H501 Readings* (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, October 2012), H501RJ-1-H501RJ-3.

[45]*A Military History of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College 1881-1963* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combined Arms Research Library, 1963), http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll4/id/313 (accessed 30 December 2012), 1-2.

situations, making and implementing decisions, controlling operations, and assessing progress."[46]

Similar to the German influence on the creation of the American Military staff, the German philosophy of *Auftragstaktik* is echoed in the modern philosophy of mission command. As outlined in the introduction of ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command*:

> Mission Command has been the Army's preferred style for exercising command since the 1980s. The concept traces its roots back to the German concept of *Auftragstaktik*, which roughly translates to mission-type tactics. *Auftragstaktik* held all German commissioned and noncommissioned officers dutybound to do whatever the situation required, as they personally saw it. Understanding and achieving the broader purpose of a task was the central idea behind this style of command. Commanders expected subordinates to act when opportunities arose.[47]

The concept of mission command has informed iterations of U.S. Army doctrine since the publication of the 1982 version of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*. It states, "Commanders will find it difficult to determine what is happening. Small units will often have to fight without sure knowledge about their force as a whole. Electronic warfare, vulnerability of command and control facilities, and mobile combat will demand initiative in subordinate commanders."[48] As evidenced in this passage, the principles in ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command* contain many linkages to previous doctrinal publications. This philosophy has gained more authority recently, due to the nature of the counterinsurgency environment and the increased necessity for decentralized decision making. Many of the elements first identified by Scharnhorst, Clausewitz, and Moltke

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[46]Department of the Army, ADRP 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2012), 1-2.

[47]Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, v.

[48]Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, August 1982), 1-3.

remain true on the modern battlefield and therefore have become integral to current mission command philosophy.[49]

Current U.S. Army doctrine, outlined in ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command* has identified and defined six principles to guide action within mission command philosophy.[50] These principles are:

1. Build Cohesive Teams through Mutual Trust. Mutual trust is shared confidence among commanders, subordinates and partners. Effective commanders build cohesive teams in an environment of mutual trust. There are few shortcuts to gaining the trust of others. Developing trust takes time, and it must be earned.
2. Create Shared Understanding. A critical challenge for commanders, staffs, and unified action partners is creating a shared understanding of their operational environment, the operation's purpose, problems, and approaches to solving them. Shared understanding and purpose form the basis for unity of effort and trust.
3. Provide a clear Commander's Intent. The commander's intent is a clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state that supports mission command, provides focus to the staff, and helps subordinates and supporting commander's act to achieve the commander's desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold as planned.

[49]Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, v.

[50]Ibid., 1-3.

4. Exercise Disciplined Initiative. Leaders and subordinates who exercise disciplined initiative create opportunity by taking action to develop the situation. Disciplined initiative is action in the absence of orders, when existing orders no longer fit the situation, or when unforeseen opportunities or threats arise. Commanders rely on subordinates to act.
5. Use Mission Orders. Commanders use mission orders to assign tasks, allocate resources, and issue broad guidance. Mission orders are directives that emphasize to subordinates the results to be obtained, not how they are to achieve them.
6. Accept Prudent Risk. Commanders accept prudent risk when making decisions because uncertainty exists in all military operations. Prudent risk is a deliberate exposure to potential injury or loss when the commander judges the outcome in terms of mission accomplishment as worth the cost.

This study analyzed the use of individual mission command principles during Rommel's and Jackson's campaigns. Although each principle outlined in ADRP 6-0 could have been an independent study, this study examined three which transcend the time and international variances that separate the two campaigns. It will explore to what extent Jackson and Rommel used the principles of; (1) build cohesive teams through mutual trust, (2) exercise disciplined initiative, and (3) provide a clear commander's intent. These three principles may be the most important and arguably form the core elements of the mission command philosophy.[51]

[51]Ibid., 2-1.

A sincere attempt was made to select these principles with absolute impartiality, with no preconceived objective to portray either commander in a positive or negative light. The merits or shortcomings of the campaigns studied stand on their own. The campaigns were selected due to their historic importance, the reputations of their commanders, and time separation between the two wars. This study does not have the intent to grade these commanders on a philosophy that was undeveloped during their careers. It is the hope of this study that by examining the methods of these two renowned commanders through contemporary mission command principles, timeless leadership lessons will be highlighted, that can be used by professional military officers in the execution of mission command philosophy in years to come.[52]

Since mission command is a contemporary leadership tool, it cannot be used to directly analyze the campaigns of Stonewall Jackson or Field Marshal Rommel. Although these principles were known and used, the title of mission command was completely foreign to both. In addition, due to the decades of separation, many modern tools were either unavailable to these commanders or were used differently. During the 1860s, U.S. Army doctrinal publications remained largely undeveloped. In their place the army used drill manuals that were written privately and used, based on the personal preference of the commander. One such manual was *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics* written by Major William Hardee in 1855.[53] Manuals such as this discussed basic weapons drill and small unit tactics, but concentrated mainly at the company level and below. The first document

[52]Ibid.

[53]Richard E. Kerr, Jr., "Wall of Fire—The Rifle and Civil War Infantry Tactics" (Masters' Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth: Kansas, 1990), 31-33.

that could be considered a true army doctrinal publication focused on combined arms employment was the *Field Service Regulations,* published in 1905. The U.S. Army of the Civil War period, and by extension the Confederate Army, was completely without formal guidance or doctrine outlining how to lead and maneuver large formations on the battlefield. This left commanders to develop their styles of leadership from observing other officers and personal experience.[54]

Conversely, Rommel spent a large part of his career training and leading soldiers in the German *Reichswehr.* This institution had not only been founded on quality leadership, but had a long history of advocating decentralized decision making and empowered leaders through the philosophy of *Auftragstaktik.* In addition, the German Military developed and published modern doctrinal manuals in response to the lessons of World War I. *Leadership and Combat of Combined Arms Forces* was published in 1921 and eventually expanded into the doctrine of *Truppenfuhrung,* released in 1932. These documents outlined the importance of the tank to the modern battlefield and advocated the use of firepower and maneuver to achieve rapid success. Rommel was a student of these documents and was familiar with their usage through years of German Military service. While this doctrinal foundation was instrumental in developing Rommel into the leader he became during World War II, it was completely unavailable to Jackson.[55]

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[54]Clinton J. Ancker III, "The Evolution of Mission Command in U.S. Army Doctrine, 1905 to the Present," *Military Review* 93, no. 2 (March-April 2013): 42-43.

[55]Williamson Murray, "May 1940: Contingency and fragility of the German RMA," in *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050,* ed., MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 158-60.

In addition to the combination of doctrine and experiences that guided Jackson and Rommel, the use of military staffs was also influential to their leadership styles. During the Civil War, many officers were commissioned out of necessity and only a small percentage had experience in the pre-war U.S. Army. Due to this, Jackson appointed able-bodied men to be officers on his staff based largely on their level of efficiency and expertise. An example is when Jedediah Hotchkiss reported to Jackson in 1862 with extensive expertise in cartography. Although he did not know him previously, Jackson assigned him to his staff, and tasked him with mapping duties. Hotchkiss proved to be an invaluable member of Jackson's staff by providing him situational awareness and reconnaissance reports throughout the campaign. Although many of Jackson's staff proved to be proficient in staff and organizational duties, most were without professional training or prior military experience.[56]

Rommel's staff was largely the opposite of Jackson's. Germany maintained a long tradition of professional officers of the general staff corps since the opening of the *Kriegsakademie* in 1806. These officers were hand selected to perform high level staff work and ensure that their commander was successful. Rommel had experience with these highly trained officers and understood both their importance and their place within the German Army construct. Although Rommel also selected staff officers based on personal assessments, the framework of staff training and responsibilities within the two armies were entirely divergent.[57]

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[56]Hotchkiss, *Make Me a Map of the Valley*, 10.

[57]Holborn, "The Prusso-German School," 281-84.

Viewed together, Jackson's Valley Campaign and Rommel's North Africa Campaign have many similarities. Jackson and Rommel were both operational commanders responsible for linking tactical actions with strategic goals. They both operated autonomously, geographically separated from their decision making authority. In addition, they both were required to operate in a fluid environment where changing situations demanded rapid decision making: no one else possessed the understanding to appreciate the situation. Although there were similarities, the time and variances in military culture that separate the two men also bred noticeable differences. Each used elements of mission command philosophy in varying degrees at the tactical and operational level within their respective campaigns, in an attempt to achieve success.[58]

[58]Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 2-2.

CHAPTER 3

THE VALLEY CAMPAIGN

Outside Centreville, Virginia, in October 1861, Major General Thomas J. Jackson reflected on the lessons he learned from the Battle of First Manassas. Jackson contemplated the events on Henry Hill and the actions of his Virginia Brigade in a fight for the guns of Captain James Ricketts' battery. His brigade performed well under fire and helped secure the first decisive victory for the fledgling Confederacy. As an unintended result of his brigade's actions, Stonewall Jackson earned one of the most famous monikers in American Military history.[59]

Although Jackson felt that the Confederate Army should maintain its momentum and push toward Washington, D.C., the leaders of the army were not in a position to begin a large-scale offensive campaign. Many agreed with Jackson on the need for continued action, as additional time would only serve to strengthen the Union Army. Others thought, for compelling reasons, that because of the lateness of the season and resource limitations they should postpone action until after the winter.[60] President Jefferson Davis met with General Joseph E. Johnston and other leaders at a conference near Fairfax Court House on 1 October 1861, to discuss their options. Although Johnston advocated operations north of the Potomac, Davis concluded that due to resource limitations Confederate strategy in the east would remain defensive for the time being. However, based on the reorganization of the army's geographic commands and the

[59]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 264.

[60]Ibid., 281.

thoughts of his generals, Davis did concede that a smaller, more focused offensive might be possible. Jackson would not have to wait until spring to attempt to regain the momentum against the Union.[61]

Jackson received a dispatch formally appointing him Commander of the Valley District of the Department of Northern Virginia on 21 October 1861. The news came as a surprise and the realization that Jackson would be leaving his beloved Stonewall Brigade made the development bittersweet. Many Confederate leaders felt it might be a mistake to transfer the best Brigade Commander at Manassas, at a time when the army was dealing with extensive leadership and organizational problems. One senior officer stated, "I fear the Government is exchanging our best Brigade Commander for a second or third class Major General."[62] Additionally, success at brigade level does not always translate into capacity for autonomous command, geographically separated from both leadership and support alike. After Jackson bid a heartfelt farewell to his brigade, he and his staff headed west with more questions than answers.[63]

Jackson's early years were marked by tragedy and turbulence as he grew up in western Virginia. Thomas Jonathan Jackson was the third child born to Jonathan and Julia Jackson in Clarksburg, Virginia on 21 January 1824. Following the death of his father and remarriage of his mother, the family was plagued by financial hardship, causing Jackson and his siblings to live with extended family at Jackson's Mill, near rural

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[61]Joseph L. Harsh, *Confederate Tide Rising: Robert E. Lee and the Making of Southern Strategy, 1861-1862* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1998), 28-30.

[62]Douglas, *I Rode With Stonewall*, 25.

[63]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 15.

Weston, Virginia. His mother eventually died from complications during childbirth in 1831, orphaning her children.[64] Jackson remained close to his younger sister Laura, and began to attend a local school, quickly showing an affinity for learning. He even borrowed books from a family friend to expand his knowledge. During this period he was introduced to the Bible and began to attend church regularly, although his full religious disposition would not surface until later. His religious passion led him to contemplate the ministry, but an appointment to West Point in 1842 required that Jackson integrate his religious beliefs into a military regimen instead.[65]

Although Jackson had little formal education as he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point, he possessed a genuine desire to learn. Some of his classmates were better prepared academically, having had formal schooling and enrolled in preparatory math and language classes prior to their matriculation. Although not a gifted student, Jackson passed his initial examinations and became a member of the class of 1846, with such men as George B. McClellan and Ambrose Powell Hill. The spartan accommodations of cadet life were nothing new to Jackson. He was unaccustomed to luxury and saw little use for overindulgence. In a real sense Jackson had arrived with little and had even less to go back to, in Jackson's Mill.[66]

Although his classmates found him socially reserved and eccentric, he earned their respect. President Ulysses S. Grant, a member of the class of 1843, who knew

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[64]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 15.

[65]Ethan S. Rafuse, *Stonewall Jackson: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 5.

[66]John C. Waugh, *The Class of 1846: From West Point to Appomattox, Stonewall Jackson, George McClellan and Their Brothers* (New York: Warner Books, 1994), 12.

Jackson at the academy, said of him, "he had so much courage and energy, worked so hard, and governed his life by a discipline so stern that he steadily worked his way along and rose far above others who had more advantages."[67] Jackson's stubborn devotion enabled him to advance to a respectable rank in the class. He graduated and became an Artillery Officer in 1846. The four years at West Point had reinforced Jackson's staunch discipline and strict obedience to authority. At the same time, the demanding engineering curriculum emphasized system and order in all things. This respect for regulations and order would heavily shape Jackson's leadership philosophy in years to come.[68]

Following graduation, Jackson and many of his classmates joined Brigadier General Zachary Taylor's Army in Mexico. Jackson was assigned to an Artillery Unit under the command of Captain Francis Taylor. However, no formal officer positions were available. Jackson was eager and desired to be close to the action. Throughout the next few months he participated in a few small, but memorable, engagements. The culmination of his Mexican War experience occurred at the Battle of Chapultepec on 13 September 1847, when he manned a dangerously exposed position with his six pound guns. There he exchanged fire with Mexican batteries, and ultimately enabled many of his classmates to assault the city. When asked later by a Virginia Military Institute (VMI) cadet about his decision to remain exposed, Jackson responded by saying, "If I had been ordered to run, I should have done so; but I was directed to hold my position, and I had

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[67]John Russell Young, *Around The World With General Grant: A Narrative of the Visit of General U.S. Grant, Ex-President of the United States, to Various Countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa in 1877, 1878, 1879* (New York: American News Company, 1879), 2:210.

[68]Waugh, *The Class of 1846*, 70.

no right to abandon it."[69] Jackson's unquestionable devotion to duty and strict adherence to orders, even in the face of extreme danger, foreshadows his command philosophy and expectations in executing orders under fire.[70]

In the years immediately after the Mexican War, Jackson was assigned to garrison duties in New York and Florida. Although the duty was often boring, consisting of routine reports and correspondence, Jackson conducted his tasks dutifully. While stationed at Fort Hamilton, New York, Jackson was again under the command of brevet Lieutenant Colonel Francis Taylor. Taylor was a professional soldier in all regards and the first model of leadership that Jackson experienced. Jackson deeply admired Taylor's professionalism and his religious devotion showed him that a man could be a professional soldier while remaining subordinate to God. Taylor mentored Jackson in his faith and sponsored Jackson when he was baptized in 1849. Shortly after, he said of himself, "Rather than willfully violate the known will of God, I will forfeit my life. It may seem strange to you, yet nevertheless such a resolution I have taken, and I will by it abide."[71] The religious devotion and subordination that Jackson learned during these years continued to shape his decision making and became an integral part of his leadership philosophy.[72]

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[69]Mary Anna Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Thomas J. Jackson* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1892), 45.

[70]Waugh, *The Class of 1846*, 121.

[71]Thomas Jackson Arnold, *Early Life and Letters of General Thomas J. Jackson* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1916), 19.

[72]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 49.

As Jackson strengthened his religious convictions, the slow pace of peacetime promotion also became clear. Although a brevet Major for his actions during the Mexican War, Jackson officially remained a Lieutenant, behind nearly a dozen officers within his regiment for promotion. Besides sluggish advancement, Jackson also had severely strained relations with a new Commanding Officer, Captain William H. French, which made his daily routine unpleasant. Jackson finally accepted a position on the faculty of the VMI in Lexington, Virginia and subsequently resigned his commission in the regular army in 1851.[73]

Jackson served as a Professor of Natural Philosophy and Artillery at VMI until his appointment into the Confederate Army in 1861, retaining the rank of brevet Major from the onset. VMI was a suitable fit for Jackson as many aspects were modeled after West Point and it was often referred to as, "The West Point of the South." The Superintendent of VMI, Colonel Francis H. Smith, was also a member of the West Point Class of 1833. During his tenure, Jackson distinguished himself as a strict disciplinarian whose teaching abilities were not universally admired. His reserved and introverted demeanor did not lend itself well to lengthy classroom explanations; Jackson's formal approach was evident in all of his lessons.[74] Although conservative in his social interactions, Jackson enjoyed the friendship of many of Lexington's well known citizens. Jackson grew fond of his position at VMI and enjoyed his experiences over the next 10 years.[75]

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[73]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 108.

[74]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 53.

[75]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 115-116.

At the outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861, Jackson's experiences throughout his career at West Point, Mexico, and at VMI had shaped his leadership style. With no true doctrine available, Jackson had only basic tactical manuals to guide his actions.[76] While these manuals allowed Jackson's units to train on basic weapons tactics, they provided no guidance or discussion on leadership techniques or employment of military units above the tactical level. The development of command and leadership style was learned solely based on the experiences of the individual, combined with the military culture of the antebellum army.[77]

A number of experiences in the army had been paramount to Jackson's development of a strict disciplinarian and rigidly controlled style of leadership. Although Jackson had initially struggled at West Point, his dedication to the ordered and disciplined structure eventually made him successful. While in Mexico, Jackson also subordinated himself to authority and by following orders at Chapultepec was rewarded for his disciplined actions. Likewise, at VMI he had shown cadets that strict adherence to regulations would allow them to achieve success throughout their military or civilian careers. In all of these circumstances, Jackson was shown that subordination to authority and rigid discipline was the path to success. Orders were given by seniors and subordinates executed them without question. There was no requirement for the explanation of orders or subordinate initiative on the battlefield.[78]

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[76]Kerr, "Wall of Fire," 31-33.

[77]Ancker, "The Evolution of Mission Command in U.S. Army Doctrine," 42-43.

[78]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 45.

Captain Taylor was also an important figure in developing Jackson's religious and leadership approaches. In the years after the Mexican War, Taylor's influence not only fully introduced Jackson to a Christian lifestyle, but it also allowed him to infuse his religious subordination into his military leadership. As his first Company Commander during the Mexican War and again at Fort Hamilton, Jackson spent many months watching Taylor's leadership style. Jackson learned much from Taylor, a man whom he deeply respected. Following his baptism in 1849, Jackson's faith served to reinforce his preferences for strict orders and subordination to authority.[79]

These experiences also shaped Jackson's strict adherence to regimen and peculiar habits. His daily routine was largely focused on religious devotion and left little room for personal interaction. He was strangely quiet and never said more than was essential, leaving many feeling distant and unconnected following conversation.[80] Jackson also suffered from severe indigestion, amongst other things, and maintained a bland diet and rigid posture in large part to minimize misery from this affliction. Having little interest in social interaction, Jackson's leadership style had no requirement for personal connection or friendship. These actions largely prevented closeness or camaraderie with subordinate leaders during the Valley Campaign and seemed to cause many to dislike his harsh methods and inflexible style.[81]

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[79]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 93-94.

[80]Robert G. Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley: Thomas J. 'Stonewall' Jackson's Shenandoah Valley Campaign, Spring 1862* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1976), 51-52.

[81]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 71-72.

Similarly, following Jackson's commission in the Confederate Army in April 1861, his experiences at both Harpers Ferry and Bull Run reinforced the requirement for strict adherence to regulations. Jackson had been assigned by Governor John Letcher to take command at Harpers Ferry, Virginia on 27 April 1861. His orders were again echoed by the Commander of all Virginia Forces, General Robert E. Lee.[82] These early interactions built an important professional framework, as both men became acquainted with each other.[83]

Upon his arrival to the arsenal a few days later, he discovered that the arsenal was in disrepair and no semblance of military control was practiced by the handful of militia and officers posted at Harpers Ferry. Many of the arsenal buildings had been destroyed by the retreating Federals when Virginia troops had moved to capture the town. No personnel were assigned to oversee the function of commissary, hospital, or quartermaster duties. To make matters worse, scores of recruits who wanted to enlist had not received any instructions. Jackson quickly established order with the assistance of a small number of cadets and faculty from VMI. The situation was soon under control and again reinforced to Jackson that regimented control and discipline were required to maintain order during all military operations.[84]

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[82]Lee to Jackson, 27 April 1861 and 1 May 1861, Dowdey and Manarin, eds., *Wartime Papers*, 13, 17.

[83]Ibid.

[84]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 223-225. Jackson later selected a few officers that met his standards of discipline and efficiency, such as Maj. John A Harman, to be on his staff. Harman was Jackson's quartermaster throughout the Valley Campaign.

Jackson's experience at Manassas proved no different. The battle quickly grew confusing due to inexperienced soldiers and leaders. Chaos reigned, both Union and Confederate units were marching and countermarching as quickly as orders could be issued. Generals were controlling the tactical movements of regiments and batteries in an attempt to combat the disorder. Jackson controlled his regiments directly, shifting his brigade as he was directed. After reaching Henry Hill, Jackson awaited orders to attack. He personally gathered artillery batteries and positioned them to give the appearance of increased Confederate strength.[85]

Jackson thrust his small brigade forward, overcoming the chaos of the battlefield by maintaining direct control of his units and advancing with them. They succeeded in capturing the Federal batteries and Jackson received acclaim for his courageous actions. These events solidified Jackson's dedication to direct control and disciplined action as the way to achieve success. Jackson had achieved success during both war and peace through rigid discipline and subordination to authority. These principles would continue to guide him during the beginning of the Valley Campaign.[86]

A few months later, in November 1861, Jackson arrived in Winchester to begin understanding the situation in the valley. His instructions from Johnston were to protect the fertile Shenandoah Valley against larger Union forces. Wheat, corn, and livestock were plentiful in the farmlands and were important from an economic and subsistence standpoint. From the Union perspective, the valley offered a Confederate path of advance into Maryland and by extension, threatened Washington, D.C. In addition, protection of

[85]Ibid., 261-262.

[86]Ibid., 265-266.

the vital Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was a critical planning factor. The Union could not begin conducting offensive operations against the Confederate Army if its territory and capital were not secure.[87]

It quickly became clear that the resources Jackson had at his disposal in 1861 were inadequate. He was virtually without an army: no regular forces as of yet were assigned to his district. The only troops in his sector were scattered Militia Infantry and Cavalry units that were neither well trained nor equipped for any type of organized action. The main concern of this militia was protection of their homes and families with little interest in offensive operations.[88] After his initial assessment was complete, Jackson contacted Richmond to request forces for his task. Although he did not specify directly, he hoped for his trusted Stonewall Brigade to once again be put under his command. Although Jackson was no longer in command, the unit retained their designation as the Stonewall Brigade throughout the war. Jackson had explicit confidence in its capabilities. The brigade predominantly originated from the valley and thus also brought familiarity to a complex problem. After a week, the Stonewall Brigade, as well as 6,000 troops from the Army of the Northwest under Brigadier General William Loring, then operating in the Alleghany Mountains, was transferred to Jackson's command. Although it would take time for them to arrive, the wheels were in motion to build a force capable of operating against Federals in the valley.[89]

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[87]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 38.

[88]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 38.

[89]Ibid., 42.

As the winter of 1861 and 1862 began, Federal troop dispositions in the valley were mainly defensive in nature. The Federal strategy was to build troop strength during the winter months and begin major offensive operations in the spring of 1862. The two Federal commands that surrounded Jackson's district were the Department of West Virginia, under Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans, and the Department of the Shenandoah under Major General Nathaniel P. Banks. With his headquarters located in Frederick, Maryland, and under orders from McClellan to remain there for the winter, Banks maintained only small detachments along the Potomac River.[90] Although both Banks and Rosecrans had ideas for offensive operations, they were relegated to defensive tasks for the moment. The only other noteworthy Union force was the Command of Brigadier General Benjamin F. Kelley, which belonged to Rosecrans, and had occupied Romney, Virginia, on the south fork of the Potomac River in October 1861, in order to secure the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from attack. He was soon reinforced by Banks, bringing his total force to 5,000 men. The Federal occupation of Romney, which endangered Winchester, gained Jackson's interest.[91]

Similarly, following the Fairfax conferences in October, Johnston consolidated his advanced elements and gathered his units in a defensive perimeter near the Fairfax Court House. During the fall and early winter Johnston improved his lines of

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[90]Ibid., 50.

[91]McClellan to Banks, 2 December 1861, in U.S. War Department; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1880-1901), Ser. I, 5:673. Hereafter this source will be truncated in this manner: *OR*, 5:673. All references will be to series I unless otherwise noted. If a volume has more than one part, it will be in parenthesis after the volume number, i.e. *OR*, 5(2):673.

communication and defensive positions in preparation for a Federal advance. Intelligence reports, however, hinted that McClellan would not conduct a frontal assault, as he gathered large amounts of transport vessels for a future operation. Other than a minor fight at Ball's Bluff on 21 October, the situation outside of Washington was quiet over the winter months.[92]

Upon Jackson's arrival in the valley, he found his reporting channels were not clearly specified. Jackson commanded the Valley District of the Army of Northern Virginia, an independent command directly subordinate to Johnston, the department commander, whose headquarters was located near Manassas. All orders and guidance should have been transmitted, or at least approved, by Johnston. However, no instructions were given pertaining to corresponding directly with Richmond. Johnston gave little attention to Jackson's troop requests during the first weeks of organization as he had other important issues to deal with and no Federal threat then existed in the valley. Jackson's command soon began receiving dispatches directly from government officials in Richmond. The Confederate government routinely responded directly to Jackson's requests, circumventing Johnston. This is evidenced by the assignment of the first units to the valley, ordered by Acting Secretary of War Judah Benjamin without notification to or approval from Johnston. Jackson, eager to receive support, acted on the instructions from Richmond without question. Although these dispatches broke the disciplined procedures that Jackson valued, the information received from Richmond proved to be invaluable for resourcing his actions.[93]

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[92]Harsh, *Confederate Tide Rising*, 35-36.

[93]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 45.

Prior to conducting operations, Jackson needed to improve discipline in the ranks. He quickly identified the discipline problems that he believed presented obstacles to effective command and control. However, Jackson's strict adherence to regulation and subordination to authority might not prove successful with leaders unfamiliar with his leadership style. Soon after arriving in Winchester, Jackson upheld the sentence of death by firing squad for a drunken soldier guilty of shooting his Captain during an altercation. [94] Jackson's strict adherence to regulations and discipline left no room for explanations. The introduction of confident subordinates, and complex battlefield situations made continuation of this strict and inflexible approach extremely difficult.[95]

On the heels of this execution, Jackson petitioned Richmond to appoint a new commander for the Stonewall Brigade to replace the temporary Commander, Colonel James Allen of the 2nd Virginia. Jackson was unimpressed by all of his regimental commanders, feeling none were worthy of the promotion. Jackson failed to outline, to Richmond what specific prior experience or characteristics he required. Without this information, Richmond assigned Brigadier General Richard Garnett to Command the Stonewall Brigade. Seven years Jackson's senior, with extensive duty on the frontier, Garnett possessed significant experience and political connections.[96]

Soon after Garnett's arrival on 7 December 1861, an interesting and unexpected dilemma occurred. Garnett was appointed, in response to Jackson's request for a commander to curtail indiscipline within the Stonewall Brigade. However, Jackson felt

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[94]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 294.

[95]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 81-82.

[96]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 45.

he received a politically connected officer incapable of the harsh disciplined leadership he expected. In addition, and most important, Jackson alienated his subordinate regimental commanders by not promoting internally for the position. Some of the regimental commanders had served under Jackson at First Manassas and seemed acceptable for selection to command the brigade. Both Colonel John Echols (27th Virginia) and Col. Arthur C. Cummings (33rd Virginia) had capable records. Echols, a VMI graduate, was later promoted to Brigadier General and commanded a brigade. As was characteristic of Jackson, he made his decision without explanation. In essence, his attempt to increase discipline and cohesion within his ranks succeeded in antagonizing mid-level leaders. This personnel action ended with significant issues of trust and confidence in his command—directly against the mission command principle of building cohesive teams.[97]

In addition to causing discord amongst his leaders, tension between Garnett and Jackson soon became evident. In one instance, during the Romney Expedition, during January 1862, Garnett exercised initiative and allowed his men to stop their movement to cook rations. Jackson perceived this as an undisciplined and unnecessary delay in operations. Garnett explained to Jackson by saying, "It is impossible for the men to march farther without them." To which Jackson quickly replied, "I never found anything impossible with this brigade." In Garnett's defense, Jackson's personal connection with the Stonewall Brigade equated to harsh evaluations of its leaders, frequently measured directly against how he personally led the unit.[98]

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[97]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 296.

[98]Ibid., 71.

With his personnel adjustments underway, Jackson did not establish fixed winter quarters and began an offensive to disrupt the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Jackson planned for an attack on Federal forces in the lower valley, who were not expecting enemy actions during the winter. His first objective was the small Federal garrison at Romney. Though outnumbered, Jackson felt initiative and surprise might carry the day. With the rest of the Confederate Army sitting idle near Manassas, he was eager to initiate action. In a letter to Benjamin on 20 November, Jackson bypassed Johnston and explained his eagerness, "I deem it of great importance that Northwestern Virginia be occupied by Confederate troops this winter. At present it is to be assumed that the enemy are not expecting an attack there, and the resources of that region necessary for the subsistence of our troops are in greater abundance."[99]

Jackson submitted his operational plan for the Romney Operation to military and government leaders. Johnston agreed with the concept, but again, the final approval came through political channels when Benjamin gave his consent. Jackson made it clear to Benjamin that he understood the harsh realities of winter campaigning, and knew that it would come "at the sacrifice of much personal comfort."[100] However, Jackson was not prepared for the backlash that would occur in his army as a result of this operation.

After achieving mixed results in a small expedition to destroy Dam No. 5 on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal on 7-8 December, Jackson prepared to move against a Federal garrison at Bath, Virginia, en route to attacking Romney. The offensive was scheduled to begin on New Years' Day 1862. However, as preparations were underway, a

[99]Jackson to Benjamin, 20 November 1861, *OR*, 5:965.

[100]Ibid., 966.

lack of cohesion in the army became evident. Loring's force had been assigned to Jackson on paper for weeks, but had only recently arrived on 27 December 1861. With his arrival came problems. Loring was a lifelong soldier with experience in both the Mexican and Seminole Wars. He had lost an arm at Chapultepec and resigned his commission in 1861 as the youngest line Colonel within the army. Without question, Loring believed he possessed the experience and knowledge to conduct independent operations without assistance or direction from a civilian professor turned General.[101]

To complicate matters, Benjamin had not explicitly ordered Loring to the valley. Rather he strongly urged him to support Jackson's winter offensive and ultimately left the final decision to Loring to accept or decline. Loring was hesitant about a winter offensive and doubted Jackson's capabilities.[102] Showing contempt for Jackson's subordination of his force, Loring refused to assimilate his command into the Valley Army. He demanded that his units retain their designation as the Army of the Northwest. Jackson, more concerned with initiating operations than unit naming conventions, relented to Loring's request.[103]

This interaction highlights the lack of trust and cohesion among the units of Jackson's command. It also illustrates the friction that was present as the unpopular winter expedition was initiated. Jackson's relentless expectations for discipline through military regulations and procedures remained. He gave little or no thought to promoting

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[101]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 300.

[102]Benjamin to Loring, 24 November 1861, *OR*, 5:969.

[103]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 66.

teambuilding or establishing mutual trust as he commenced his first offensive operation.[104]

Although action against the Bath garrison was delayed by weather, Jackson finally pushed his forces north from Unger's Store on 3 January 1862. The Federal garrison in Bath totaled no more than 1,000 men. Jackson used his militia forces to cover the western approach to the town while Loring's forces lead the column on the eastern road leading into Bath. On

4 January Loring's forces approached Bath at dusk and met resistance from Federal skirmishers. The result of this small action had long term implications. Loring's column deployed carefully to meet the threat. Jackson, unsatisfied with this measured response, ordered the commander of Loring's lead regiment to charge. However, moments later, Loring countermanded Jackson's order to drive Federal troops into Bath. Darkness and a driving snowstorm added to the confusion. Loring, who had not received any orders or commander's intent from Jackson concerning the operation, would not have his troops attack unknown forces during bad weather without reconnaissance. Given the circumstances, this seems to be a logical conclusion made by a seasoned leader.[105] Interestingly, Union forces in Bath comprised the 84th Pennsylvania. The inexperienced unit had arrived at Bath only the day before and was only partially effective due to issues with their new Belgian rifles.[106]

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[104]Douglas, *I Rode With Stonewall*, 30.

[105]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 73.

[106]Gary L. Ecelbarger, *Frederick W. Lander: The Great Natural American Soldier* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 166-67.

Because Loring was a Brigadier General, based on rank alone there was no question Jackson was the ranking officer. Although not specifically identified, Loring, as the next senior officer was by default the second in command. Loring complained to his staff that if Jackson was killed, he would find himself "in command of an army of the object of whose movements he knew nothing."[107] Jackson had no intention of entrusting his plans to Loring or any of his subordinates—he was equally reticent to everyone. Because of Jackson's strict disciplinarian methods, he likely expected Loring to execute his orders without question. Based on historical examples such as Chapultepec, if positions were reversed, it seems likely that Jackson would have charged into Bath at the head of his column. Loring, however, expected more information as a Brigade Commander and second in command. Until recently, Loring had been operating independently and had dealt with many of the same responsibilities now executed by Jackson. Even so, with Jackson's previous decision, Loring remained the Commander of the Army of the Northwest.[108]

Although Loring was worried about Jackson's incapacitation, Jackson remained unconcerned about such contingencies. His religious convictions caused him not to dwell on his own mortality. He subordinated himself completely to God and was prepared for his will to occur on the battlefield. His faith combined with his disciplined style of leadership may help to account for the lack of orders and desire for secrecy. Whatever the reason, Jackson's strained relationship with Loring, coupled with his unwillingness to convey his intent, contributed to a subordinate disobeying his orders. Jackson's strict

[107]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 73.

[108]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 73.

leadership style was beginning to fracture the command structure of his army. Unfortunately for Jackson, this incident alone would not cause him to modify his style of command.[109]

In the coming weeks Loring's frustration continued to grow as Jackson demanded adherence to unrealistic timetables and movements under winter conditions. Although more disjointed than planned, the Valley Army succeeded in dislodging the Bath garrison. As his army regrouped near Unger's Store, Jackson received word that the Federal garrison had abandoned Romney a few days prior, incorrectly believing Jackson had 15,000 men. Despite Federal efforts to destroy supplies, the Valley Army occupied Romney and captured numerous Federal stores on 14 January. Although Jackson had plans to continue against other elements farther north and possibly into Maryland, furloughs and increased illness in the ranks ended the operation.[110]

Following a short stay in Romney, Jackson made a fateful decision: to move the Stonewall Brigade back to Winchester and leave Loring's Brigade at Romney. Loring was immediately outraged. The fact that Jackson personally led the Stonewall Brigade back to the comfort of Winchester seemed like outright favoritism to many. Moreover, the harsh weather and road conditions had caused the unprepared troops significant suffering during the Romney Expedition. The Valley Army made winter quarters in late January near Winchester with low morale, and with many disenchanted with Jackson's leadership. Henry Kyd Douglas, a stalwart member of Jackson's staff commented, "Some

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[109]Kenneth E. Hall, *Stonewall Jackson and Religious Faith in Military Command* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2005), 11.

[110]Ecelbarger, *Frederick W. Lander,* 192-93.

stores and a few prisoners were taken, but the fruits of the [Romney] expedition did not compensate for the sickness and suffering in our army."[111] As bad as the Romney Operation was, the full impact of Jackson's inability to build a cohesive team within his command and provide a clear commander's intent, was yet to be seen.[112]

As the army prepared winter quarters, leaders within Loring's command aired their grievances to the government in Richmond. Commanders at the regimental level circulated a petition which Loring endorsed. This was not done covertly—a copy of the petition was forwarded to Jackson. Not to leave matters to chance, Loring ordered one of his well connected brigade commanders, Brigadier General William Taliaferro, to Richmond to hand deliver the document to President Davis.[113] Jackson, upon receiving his copy, submitted his resignation from the Confederate Army and requested reassignment back to VMI. Although Jackson had routinely bypassed Johnston in corresponding directly with Richmond, similar actions by his subordinates were unacceptable. In his official report of the action around Romney, Jackson acknowledged delays caused by the state of the roads. Although not discussed, his strained relationship with Loring must have weighed on his mind.[114]

After a number of prominent civil and military leaders pleaded with Jackson to withdraw his resignation, Jackson did so. Without this, the Valley Campaign would have

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[111]Douglas, *I Rode With Stonewall*, 33.

[112]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 228.

[113]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 100.

[114]Jackson's Official Report of Operations from 4 November 1861 to 21 February 1862, *OR*, 5:393.

been short lived.[115] A few days later Jackson officially filed charges against Loring for disobeying orders. The Confederacy did not have time for such matters, and President Davis had the charges dropped. However, to put the incident to rest, Loring was ordered to southwestern Virginia and soon promoted to Major General. He later became a Division Commander in the Army of the Mississippi.[116]

Although the Romney Expedition achieved few tangible results, Jackson better understood the limits of his army. He had attempted to build an army out of the required parts, but these parts did not function as a larger cohesive organization. Jackson was unhappy with the actions of subordinate commanders such as Garnett and Loring and, more importantly, his orders were not being followed. Jackson also failed to provide commander's intent or issue clear orders prior to the operation. As evidenced by the events with Garnett and Loring, although Jackson exercised disciplined initiative to plan this operation, he clearly did not tolerate its use by subordinates. Jackson was leading his army as he had led his brigade, demanding strict discipline and retaining absolute control.[117]

The two months following the Romney Expedition were spent in winter quarters near Winchester. Although better weather improved morale, enlistments were expiring and desertion was not uncommon. Moreover, a string of Confederate losses had occurred since the dawn of 1862 that served to dampen morale. Nashville fell into Union hands

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[115]Douglas, *I Rode With Stonewall*, 36.

[116]Ezra J. Warner, *Generals In Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (Baton Rouge, LA: University of Louisiana Press, 1995), 193-94.

[117]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 88-90.

after Forts Henry and Donelson surrendered in mid-February.[118] While in winter quarters in Winchester, Jackson was frequently hosted by Reverend James Graham. During one of their dialogues, Jackson shared his aggressive philosophy with Graham by saying, "The business of a soldier is to fight. Armies are not called out to dig trenches, to throw up breastworks, and live in camps, but to find the enemy, and strike him; to invade his country, and do him all possible damage in the shortest possible time." Although Graham was unprepared for such a discussion, Jackson's desire for aggressive action was clearly evident.[119]

Meanwhile, Federal strategy for the Shenandoah Valley until March 1862 was premised on a defensive posture focused around Harpers Ferry and the upper valley. In February, Major General George McClellan had received President Abraham Lincoln's reluctant approval for his Peninsula Campaign against Richmond. Lincoln's consent came only after his insistence that the Upper Potomac and valley be secured. In response, McClellan moved two divisions under Banks and Brigadier General James Shields across the Potomac, to protect the valley and provide security for Washington during the Army of the Potomac's absence.[120] The approval from Lincoln signaled a Federal shift from a defensive to a limited offensive posture in the valley. McClellan intended to use Banks and Shields as a covering force for the lower valley while he conducted amphibious

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[118]Ibid., 98.

[119]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 324-25.

[120]William J. Miller, "Such Men as Shields, Banks and Fremont: Federal Command in Western Virginia, March-June 1862," in *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862*, ed. Gary Gallagher (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 44.

landings to capture Richmond. Following Jackson's retreat on 11 March, Shields occupied Winchester to cover the line of the Potomac while maintaining early warning of enemy movements. Although McClellan's operation was originally known as the Urbanna Plan, Johnston abandoning his Manassas defenses on 9 March 1862 required McClellan to modify his concept.[121]

The day of Jackson's retreat from Winchester, 11 March 1862, also marked the day that Lincoln ordered McClellan to vacate the General-in-Chief position and relinquish control of all Union armies except for the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton retained centralized control of all separate departments not under McClellan's command, including the Department of the Shenandoah under Banks, officially designated the V Corps beginning on 13 March 1862. Lincoln's order also created the Mountain Department, under Major General John C. Fremont, which encompassed the mountainous region between the Shenandoah Valley and Ohio.[122] This reorganization severely shrunk McClellan's authority and influence over Federal troop dispositions.[123] In the wake of these changes, on 17 March, McClellan's units began movement by sea to Fortress Monroe to begin their attack against the Confederate capital.[124]

In light of the Union movements into the Valley, Johnston issued new orders to Jackson. However, Johnston remained preoccupied with his own retreat from the

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[121]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 334-35.

[122]Lincoln to McClellan, President's War Order No.3, 11 March 1862, *OR*, 5:54.

[123]Lincoln to McClellan, 9 April 1862, *OR*, 12(3):43.

[124]McClellan to Banks, 16 March 1862, *OR*, 13:15.

Centreville and Manassas area and gave imprecise orders to Jackson. He explained his intentions to Jackson by saying, "that officer was instructed to endeavor to employ the invaders in the valley, but without exposing himself to the dangers of defeat, by keeping so near the enemy as to keep him from making any considerable detachment to McClellan, but not so near that he might be compelled to fight."[125] Johnston desired for the Valley Army to remain on the defensive while posing enough of a threat to deny reinforcements to McClellan. In Jackson's assessment, a defensive posture was not the best policy.[126]

In an early March letter to Congressman Alexander Boteler, Jackson displayed his preference for offensive operations by stating, "What I desire is to hold the country as far as practicable until we are in a condition to advance, and then with God's blessing, let us make thorough work of it."[127] He ended the powerful letter by saying, "I have only to say this, that if this valley is lost, Virginia is lost."[128] This passage shows Jackson's understanding of the need to link his tactical objectives with the strategic goal of preventing Federal reinforcement outlined by Johnston's orders.[129]

From a Confederate standpoint, the first weeks of March were filled with turbulence. On 9 March, Johnston evacuated the Manassas line, with considerable loss of equipment and supplies, and consolidated his forces in the vicinity of the Orange Court

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[125]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 239.

[126]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 329.

[127]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 239.

[128]Ibid.

[129]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 330.

House. Soon afterward, McClellan's forces occupied the abandoned defensive positions near Manassas. As part of this evacuation, Major General Richard S. Ewell's division operated as a rear guard near Brandy Station. A few weeks later, Johnston, on taking his forces to the peninsula, made Ewell available to Jackson if required.[130] Although Jackson and Ewell were both major generals, Johnston made it clear that Jackson, as a district commander, would be in command should their forces combine. Ewell's availability to Jackson made larger operations possible, but required Jackson to mature his directive leadership style.[131]

Ewell was a graduate of West Point Class of 1840, and, like Jackson, had distinguished himself in battle during the Mexican War. He possessed bulging eyes and a thin line of hair which earned him the nickname, "old baldy." Following Mexico, he conducted duties along the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails. As a commander, Ewell was eager and determined. Although their first impressions were unfavorable, Jackson and Ewell grew to complement each other's abilities in combat.[132]

Spring also brought more positive change in Richmond. Davis, on 13 March 1862, issued orders for a new General to assume the duties of his military advisor. The appointment of Robert E. Lee to this post played an important role in shaping the Valley Campaign and fostered a personal relationship that continued until Jackson's death in

[130]Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 156.

[131]Ewell to Jackson, 13 April 1862, *OR*, 12(1):846; Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 159.

[132]Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 132.

1863.[133] His location in Richmond gave Lee an understanding of the entire military picture, better than anyone in the Confederate Army.[134] Additionally, Lee's familiarity with Jackson made his duties in directing operations in the valley more acceptable. Lee's early dispatches to both Ewell and Jackson showed the experience of a seasoned army officer. Aware of Johnston's command of the army, Lee made clear that his job was to coordinate, not to command. The professional counsel that Lee gave both commanders exemplified the attribute of exercising disciplined initiative. Although the influence, if any, that Davis had on these correspondences cannot be known, Lee's distinct ability to support and encourage field commanders belonged to him alone. Lee encouraged Jackson and Ewell to seize the initiative and partner in an incapacitating blow to Union forces in the valley.[135]

Throughout March, Jackson relied on Lieutenant Colonel Turner Ashby, his Chief of Cavalry, to provide intelligence updates and disrupt Federal lines of communication in the lower valley. Ashby's information was usually accurate and although trusted, Jackson was frequently irritated with indiscipline in his ranks.[136] The first battle of the campaign unfolded following a small, uneventful engagement near Kernstown on 22 March between Ashby and a small Federal Infantry force. Ashby was unable to ascertain the true

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[133]General Orders No. 14, 13 March 1862, Dowdey and Manarin, eds., *Wartime Papers*, 151.

[134]Lee to Jackson and Lee to Ewell, 21 April 1862, Dowdey and Manarin, eds., *Wartime Papers*, 151-52.

[135]Ibid.

[136]Hotchkiss, *Make Me a Map of the Valley*, 33.

Federal strength, mistakenly convinced that there were only a few regiments of Federals.[137]

In reality, Shields possessed nearly 10,000 fresh but untried Federal troops, and due to the skirmishing the previous day, was prepared for a general engagement. Banks had sent Shields's troops beyond Winchester to confirm that Jackson was south of Strasburg prior to moving the remainder of his forces toward Manassas Junction. Failing to confirm Jackson's location, Shields skirmished with Ashby in and around Kernstown until he finally occupied Winchester on 20 March. Although Shields was wounded in the 22 March skirmish with Ashby, his forces held a strong position on the heights north of Kernstown. Due to inaccurate intelligence from Ashby, Jackson believed the fight would be over quickly and he could dislodge the Federals with minimal effort. Jackson believed that a quick and decisive victory would improve morale and significantly impact Federal plans to shift forces toward Washington.[138]

Sunday, 23 March 1862, brought high expectations as Jackson's men marched north toward Winchester to deal with what they believed to be a small Federal detachment. Jackson had religious concerns about fighting on Sunday, but relented due to a belief that he had a victory within his reach. Although Ashby's skirmish with Federal forces was known throughout the army, Jackson failed to issue any orders or intent to his subordinates prior to his march toward Winchester. Jackson's Brigade commanders had

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[137]Peter S. Carmichael, "Turner Ashby's Appeal," in *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862*, ed. Gary Gallagher (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 147-48.

[138]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 127.

received no direction as to their specific responsibilities or been informed of the larger objectives.[139]

As Jackson approached the field, Federal batteries commanded the key terrain of Pritchard's Hill and were shelling Ashby's troops. These batteries were an advanced guard for Shields's division, which was part of Banks's independent command, detached from McClellan in Lincoln's, 11 March reorganization order. Due to Shields's wounding on 22 March, Federal command now passed to Colonel Nathan Kimball. The Federals concentrated behind the ridges and out of sight of Ashby's Cavalry. Jackson ordered Garnett's Brigade to occupy the right wing while the brigade of Brigadier General Samuel Fulkerson occupied the left. The small brigade under Colonel Jesse Burk would remain in the rear as a reserve force. In the minutes before the general assault, Jackson began to show signs of direct control and became involved in tactical actions. This is evidenced by Jackson issuing orders directly to the regimental commander of the 27th Virginia to move forward to support an exposed Confederate battery. Although belonging to Garnett's Brigade, Jackson later claimed that he was unable to find Garnett. In addition, although unspecified to his commanders, Jackson detached the artillery batteries from his brigades and created an artillery reserve which he personally commanded.[140]

Following a short artillery duel, Jackson began his attack at around 4:00 p.m. He attacked Pritchard's Hill, and then attempted to take the high ground along Sandy Ridge to cut off the Federals retreat route into Winchester. As the day wore on, fighting

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[139]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 168-70.

[140]Ibid.

intensified and it became clear that Federal strength was larger than anticipated.[141] As Garnett and Fulkerson occupied a position behind a small stone wall on Sandy Ridge, Jackson committed his reserves to reinforce their position. Soon after, however, Garnett and the Stonewall Brigade faced a numerically superior Federal force and were running low on ammunition. Casualties were steadily increasing and Garnett was unsure if reserves were moving to their aid. Although watching from a distance and aware of the large Federal force, Jackson remained resolute and failed to issue any orders to his lead brigades that were suffering heavily against the Union assaults.[142]

At this critical juncture, without orders, Garnett made the decision to withdraw his brigade from their position behind the stone wall. In Garnett's estimation, maintaining his position any longer could have caused the destruction of his force and risked capture of the Confederate Artillery. Under the weight of the Union force, Garnett's retreat initiated a retreat along the entire Confederate line. Jackson seemed to be more concerned with orchestrating regimental movements and the artillery reserve than issuing operational orders to his brigade commanders. Upon seeing his forces retreating, Jackson became infuriated.[143] Jackson was wrongly convinced that the appearance of a few small regiments that had just arrived on the field would turn the tide of the battle. Furthermore, he had not issued any orders for a retreat and believed the battle was at its turning point. Garnett attempted to explain to Jackson that his troops were tired and without sufficient

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[141]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 245.

[142]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 342-44.

[143]A. Cash Koeniger, "Prejudices and Partialities: The Garnett Controversy Revisited," in *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862*, ed. Gary Gallagher (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 222.

ammunition to continue. After a few minutes, the realization that the Federals controlled the field became evident to Jackson. His army slowly retreated south with Ashby's Cavalry screening their movement.[144]

Although Jackson was furious with the outcome of the battle and Garnett's actions, he had failed to identify any objectives or give his intent to Garnett. Additionally, Jackson's preoccupation with controlling tactical actions caused confusion at the decisive point. Jackson also assumed Ashby's intelligence assessment was accurate and had not planned for the possibility of a larger Union force. Blame for the defeat rested largely with Jackson's decision to initiate battle with insufficient intelligence. Equally as important, without orders or intent from Jackson, Garnett was blind to his desired objectives at Kernstown. Garnett's decision to retire his brigade to prevent further casualties appeared correct. In Jackson's assessment, though, Garnett's retreat orders were a breach of discipline that led to the collapse of the Confederate line.[145] In Jackson's report on Kernstown, he was critical of Garnett by stating, "Though our troops were fighting under great disadvantages, I regret that General Garnett should have given the order to fall back, as otherwise the enemy's advance would have been at least retarded, and the remaining part of my infantry reserve have had a better opportunity for coming up and taking part in the engagement."[146]

In what was becoming common among Jackson's subordinates, Garnett countered that he never received instructions from Jackson regarding his plan for the battle. As with

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[144]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 122.

[145]Koeniger, "Prejudices and Partialities," 223.

[146]Jackson's Official Report of Kernstown, 9 April 1862, *OR*, 12(1): 382.

Loring during the Romney Expedition, Garnett was the second in command, but had been given no instructions from Jackson. Garnett later described his thoughts by saying, "It is almost unnecessary to say that it was extremely embarrassing and dispiriting for my superior officer to withhold from me his confidence and the requisite information to guide and direct me in the intelligent dispatch of my duties, and whose position even I might by many accidents of service have been called on to fill."[147] Garnett did nothing more than exercise initiative to maintain his unit as a fighting force.[148] Jackson remained intolerant of initiative from his subordinates in his search for a scapegoat for his failure at Kernstown. Jackson's own inability or unwillingness to provide his intent had caused distrust between him and his second in command during his first two engagements of the campaign.[149]

Garnett's perceived mistakes at Kernstown proved too large for Jackson to overcome. A few days later, as the army camped at Rude's Hill five miles from New Market, Jackson ordered Garnett arrested pending court martial. Although Jackson was not impressed with Garnett from his arrival, the officers and men of the Stonewall Brigade had grown fond of him and respected him as a commander. Thus, Garnett's arrest was met with complete disapproval from the Stonewall Brigade. Senior leaders within the brigade felt Garnett's actions were wholly justified and recognized that Jackson was responsible for the defeat at Kernstown. Henry Kyd Douglas said of the issue, "Their [Stonewall Brigade] regret at the loss of General Garnett was so great and

[147]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 169.

[148]Koeniger, "Prejudices and Partialities," 222.

[149]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 133.

their anger at his removal so intense and universal that their conduct amounted to almost insubordination."[150] Attempting to rectify a perceived leadership problem by relieving Garnett, Jackson unintentionally fractured the loyalty of his beloved Stonewall Brigade. To make matters worse, Jackson again bypassed his regimental commanders and requested a new officer to succeed Garnett, sowing further dissatisfaction. Trust and confidence remained low when Brigadier General Charles S. Winder, a Marylander, reported on 1 April 1862, to take command of the Stonewall Brigade.[151]

Following Kernstown, Jackson's Army began to receive significant attention from Washington. Although a Confederate defeat, this unexpected engagement led many to debate potential risks if Jackson was left unchecked in the valley. Banks had left Shields's division as a covering force in the valley and moved his other division east toward Manassas in line with McClellan's defensive blueprint. After Kernstown, however, that division of Banks's command was recalled to the valley and Lincoln ordered Banks to begin offensive operations against Jackson by pushing south toward Harrisonburg.[152] As an additional protective act, Lincoln withheld a corps from McClellan's Army and created the Department of the Rappahannock, under Major General Irvin McDowell in early April 1862. Although troubled by his loss at Kernstown, Jackson had unknowingly caused a Federal division to be committed to the valley and significantly changed Federal strategy in Virginia. Although McClellan vigorously

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[150]Douglas, *I Rode With Stonewall*, 46.

[151]Robert E. L. Krick, "Maryland's Ablest Confederate: Charles S. Winder of The Stonewall Brigade," in *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862*, ed. Gary Gallagher (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 195-97.

[152]Miller, "Such Men as Shields, Banks and Fremont," 48-50.

objected, McDowell's entire corps was withheld from McClellan and remained at Fredericksburg in defense of Washington.[153]

In response to continued intelligence of McClellan's movement to the peninsula, in early April Johnston began moving south to the peninsula to assist Major General John B. Magruder's defense of Yorktown. Johnston left Ewell's division near Gordonsville to protect his rear from Federal reinforcements crossing the Rappahannock line.[154] This put Ewell in a central position to help protect the valley.

Jackson and Ewell had their first personal meeting on 28 April at Jackson's headquarters at Conrad's Store (modern day Elkton, Virginia). Jackson had retreated here in the face of Banks's post-Kernstown advance to Harrisonburg. Ewell, who remained subordinate to Johnston, had been conducting operations unilaterally outside of the valley and was unable to resist the Union advance to Fredericksburg. Ewell was not excited about the prospect of supporting Jackson. Although Ewell was an aggressive, offensive minded commander, Jackson had a poor reputation after Romney and Kernstown. During their meeting, Jackson proposed three courses of action for their combined command in the valley. Two of these involved Jackson and Ewell attacking Banks, while the third entailed Jackson combining with Brigadier General Edward "Alleghany" Johnson's force, operating west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, to attack Fremont's force endangering Staunton.[155]

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[153]Ibid., 50.

[154]Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 156-57.

[155]Ibid., 164.

After discussion, Jackson decided to combine with Johnson and strike Fremont first while Ewell moved his force to Conrad's Store. However, prior to executing this plan Jackson requested Lee's perspective. The decision came partially due to continued encouragement from Lee in Richmond. On 1 May, in response to these three proposals, Lee advised, "I must leave the selection of the one to be adopted to your judgment. . . . If you can strike an effective blow against the enemy west of Staunton, it would be very advantageous."[156] This guidance from Lee is an excellent example of a senior officer encouraging disciplined initiative without mandating a course of action. Lee's correspondence gave Jackson the encouragement and validation that he sought concerning the protection of Staunton. Although the meeting lasted several hours, Ewell left dissatisfied with unspecific orders to occupy Jackson's previous position near Conrad's Store.[157]

It appears that Jackson's correspondence with Lee and Ewell triggered a change in his leadership style. Although eager at Romney and Kernstown, he failed to communicate his plans or take his subordinates into confidence. This failure led to confusion and misunderstanding on the battlefield. In both his meeting with Ewell and letter to Lee, Jackson articulated a willingness to further develop his strategy. These actions highlight that Jackson was beginning to seek guidance from his peers and superiors. Although issues still remained with his subordinates, Jackson possessed mutual

[156]Lee to Jackson, 1 May 1862, Dowdey and Manarin, eds., *Wartime Papers*, 163.

[157]Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 165.

trust with Lee and Ewell and was beginning to create a cohesive team that continued throughout the rest of the campaign.[158]

To defend Staunton, Jackson decided to combine his forces with Johnson's 3,000 man brigade near the small village of McDowell. However, Jackson neglected to relate his complete intentions to Ewell and expected him to remain stationary and patient while he was away. This oversight infuriated and enraged Ewell and caused early tension between the two men. Ewell complained to Brigadier General J.E.B. Stuart on 14 May 1862, saying, "Genl Jackson seems thoroughly convinced that the world is centered in this valley and would keep me here if Richmond and all the Confederacy were at stake."[159] Opposing Jackson at McDowell was the lead element of Fremont's newly created Mountain Department under the command of Brigadier General Robert Milroy. Milroy impulsively struck Jackson's position to open the battle. In doing so, he unwittingly exceeded Fremont's intent to await reinforcements if he encountered a large enemy force. Milroy was unaware of Jackson's reinforcement of Johnson when he attacked the Confederate defensive positions at McDowell.[160]

After taking a lengthy route to deliberately fool the Federals, Jackson's troops occupied Sitlington's Hill, overlooking McDowell on the afternoon of 8 May 1862. Jackson rode ahead of his columns to meet with Johnson personally and discuss the options for defending Staunton. Jackson was impressed with Johnson in his initial

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[158]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 258-59.

[159]Ewell to Stuart, 14 May 1862, Pfanz, ed., *The Letters of General Richard S. Ewell,* 211.

[160]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 263.

meeting by noting, "Johnson's qualities as a soldier admirably fitted him."[161] The two Generals discussed how to best defeat the Federal columns. Ultimately, Jackson decided that a flank attack on the Union position the next day would be the best course of action. Jackson departed for the rear, as Johnson was familiar with the ground and could properly supervise his units fortifying their position on Sitlington's Hill.[162]

Jackson was surprised when fighting began around 4:30 p.m., because he believed that the lateness of the day would not allow for a general engagement. The battle began quickly and Jackson was caught off guard. Johnson was near the front and out of necessity Jackson was relegated to pushing regiments to the front, to reinforce Johnson's line as they made their way up the hill.[163] The first unit that Jackson moved forward was Taliaferro's Brigade. Johnson's early wounding made Taliaferro the senior officer at the front and added to the confusion of the fighting. Due to the battle being underway, Jackson continued to personally bring up units as opposed to taking command at the front. He sent one of his staff officers forward to "Go to General Taliaferro and tell him that I am coming, in person, with the Stonewall Brigade."[164] The reinforcements arrived in time and the Federal attack was defeated. The battle had not occurred as Jackson had anticipated. Jackson had been caught off guard and unexpected events had nearly broken the Confederate line. Additionally, Jackson had delegated authority to Johnston and

[161]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 373.

[162]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 169-71.

[163]Hotchkiss, *Make Me a Map of the Valley*, 39.

[164]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 375.

Taliaferro only of out necessity—he continued to directly control the movements of regiments during combat.[165]

The mountainous terrain played a key role in the battle, rendering cavalry incapable of pursuing retreating Federals. Although both armies sustained significant casualties, the Federal column retreated back to the protection of Fremont's main body. Staunton was secure and Jackson retained the field. The defensive victory at McDowell was a reversal in many ways of the events at Kernstown. Due to the need for a Confederate victory after the fall of Nashville, Yorktown, and New Orleans, this engagement proved a timely cure to help southern morale.[166]

Following his victory at McDowell, Jackson called another meeting with an exasperated Ewell at Mount Solon on 18 May. The conference coincided with an important turning point for both the Valley Campaign and the Confederacy as a whole.[167] Johnston had attended a conference in Richmond a few weeks earlier where he advocated an offensive north of the Potomac. The plan was rejected by Lee and Davis in favor of the defense of Yorktown. In light of Confederate defeats at Shiloh, Roanoke Island, and New Bern, it was decided that the most prudent strategy was to attempt to deal with McClellan both directly and indirectly. Although the Federals were strong, additional reinforcements from northern Virginia would almost assuredly allow them to make a successful thrust into Richmond. In response to McClellan's numerical and logistic superiority, Johnston was forced to abandon the Yorktown defensive lines on 3 May and

[165]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 171-72.

[166]Douglas, *I Rode With Stonewall*, 57.

[167]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 193.

the Norfolk Naval Base on 9 May, resulting in the prized ironclad CSS *Virginia* being scuttled. The plight of Richmond appeared dire as Federal gunboats shelled Confederate defenses at Drewry's Bluff on 15 May only seven miles south of the city.[168]

With Johnston's retreat from Yorktown and the shelling of Drewry's Bluff, direct resistance to McClellan's attack appeared futile. This spawned continued interest for indirectly attacking McClellan by preventing his reinforcement outside Richmond. Jackson and Ewell became the primary executors of this indirect attack against McClellan. A failure to be successful would allow McClellan additional combat power and to have significant strategic implications for the Confederacy. Johnston's troops took up a defensive line outside Richmond on 17 May; just one day prior to Jackson's and Ewell's meeting at Mount Solon.[169]

At the 18 May meeting, Ewell and Jackson discussed the orders that they each had received over the last month. Johnston's most recent dispatch on 13 May had directed Jackson to pursue Banks if he crossed the Blue Ridge. Banks, though, had occupied Strasburg after falling back from Harrisonburg in order to reinforce McDowell's force, assuming that Jackson no longer posed a threat. Their most recent instructions had come from Lee to Jackson only two days earlier. Lee correctly forecasted Federal intentions when he wrote:

> Banks may intend to move his army to the Manassas Junction and march thence to Fredericksburg, or he may design going to Alexandria, and proceeding thence by water either to Fredericksburg, or as I think more probable, to the peninsula to reinforce McClellan, who is calling for more reinforcements as I learn. Whatever may be Banks's intention it is very desirable to prevent him from going either to

[168]Ecelbarger, *Frederick W. Lander,* 17.

[169]Harsh, *Confederate Tide Rising,* 37-39.

> Fredericksburg or to the Peninsula, and also to destroy the Manassas road. A successful blow struck at him would delay, if it does not prevent, his moving to either place.[170]

This correspondence again illustrates Lee's understanding of the complex situation and his ability to describe to subordinates a clear vision and intent. The two commanders used Johnston's and Lee's guidance to shape their actions. Both Generals agreed that Johnston's orders did not account for the current situation. This decision, coupled with encouragement from Lee, led Jackson and Ewell to conclude that they should combine their forces and strike Banks. Although their orders did not directly account for the current enemy situation, both men understood that the overall intent was to deny reinforcements to McClellan endangering Richmond.[171]

The 18 May meeting at Mount Solon was a textbook example of exercising disciplined initiative. The fog and friction of war combined to place subordinate leaders in a position where their orders were no longer directly applicable. They analyzed their commander's intent and used disciplined initiative to inform their decision making. In formulating their plan, a mutual trust began to develop between Jackson and Ewell. Jackson drafted correspondence to Ewell later that day that said, "I would state that as you are in the Valley District you constitute part of my command. Should you receive orders different from those sent from these headquarters, please advise me of the same at as early a period as practicable. You will please move your command so as to encamp

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[170]Lee to Jackson, 16 May 1862, Dowdey and Manarin, eds., *Wartime Papers,*174.

[171]Harsh, *Confederate Tide Rising,* 36-40.

between New Market and Mount Jackson on Wednesday night next."[172] Prior to Ewell returning to his command, Jackson convinced him to attend worship service. Operations in the valley could wait on expression of his devotion to God.[173]

As Jackson's forces moved north, correspondence from Johnston dated 17 May called Ewell eastward from the valley in the defense of Richmond. Johnston stated, "If Banks is fortifying near Strasburg, the attack would be too hazardous. In such an event we must leave him in his works. General Jackson can observe him and you come eastward."[174] This created a dilemma for both men. Although his intent and vision were clear, Johnston wrote this order prior to Jackson and Ewell's meeting and did not understand that Banks could not be attacked directly at Strasburg. If Johnston's orders were obeyed, whatever opportunity existed to crush Banks would be lost. In response, Jackson wrote to Lee. Correspondence from both Lee and Johnston later in the day clarified the situation and authorized combined action. Johnston now fully understood the opportunity available in the valley. He gave his consent by writing to Ewell on 18 May, "The whole question is, whether or not General Jackson and yourself are too late to attack Banks. If so the march eastward should be made. If not (supposing your strength be sufficient) then attack."[175] Johnston clarified his commander's intent and granted discretion to Jackson in a 21 May letter by stating, "If you and Gen. Ewell united can

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[172]Jackson to Ewell, 18 May 1862, *OR*, 12(3):897.

[173]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley,* 196.

[174]Johnston to Ewell, 17 May 1862, *OR*, 12(3):896.

[175]Johnston to Ewell, 18 May 1862 in Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson,* 389.

beat Banks, do it. I cannot judge at this distance."[176] With Johnston's consent, the stage was set for a decisive attack against Banks.

Jackson moved north down the valley towards Strasburg to deceive Banks and crossed over New Market Gap into the Page (Luray) Valley on 21 May 1862. There he combined forces with Ewell at Luray, then marched north toward Front Royal, at the head of the Luray Valley. Banks's main force remained at Strasburg while he maintained Colonel John R. Kenly's 1,000 man garrison at Front Royal, separated by Massanutten Mountain. Front Royal was critical because it was situated on the Manassas Gap Railroad linking Banks's forces at Strasburg with Manassas Junction. Jackson expertly used Massanutten Mountain to shield his movement from Banks.[177] On the afternoon of 23 May 1862, Jackson's and Ewell's 17,000 man combined column surprised Kenly's isolated garrison. After a short but heated battle, Jackson succeeded in capturing nearly 700 prisoners and two rifled artillery pieces. Jackson and Ewell's first combined action was a success.[178] Front Royal solidified trust and cohesion between the commanders and their forces. The bulk of Banks's Army, though, remained west of Front Royal. Yet, as Jackson wrote in his official report, "The fruits of this movement were not restricted to the stores and prisoners captured; the enemy's flank was turned and the road opened to Winchester."[179]

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[176]Ibid.

[177]Pfanz, *The Letters of General Richard S. Ewell*, 213.

[178]Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 186.

[179]Jackson's Official Report of Front Royal and Winchester, 10 April 1863, *OR*, 12(1):703.

On the heels of Front Royal, Ewell and Jackson continued building a cohesive team grounded on mutual trust. They had interpreted Johnston's intent, combined their forces to strike an initial blow at Banks, and now shared the victory as a result. Jackson also seemed to mature as a commander. Never before had Jackson sought counsel or openly discussed his plan of action as he had with Ewell. Although Jackson's transformation was incomplete at Front Royal, his collaboration with Ewell began to develop his ability to build mutual trust with and encourage initiative from subordinates.[180]

On 24 May, Jackson ordered his Cavalry to reconnoiter the roads to determine Banks's disposition at Strasburg. Jackson was unsure if Front Royal would cause Banks to remain there or withdraw. It did not take long to determine his intentions. Jackson received word that Banks was retreating north when his Cavalry interdicted a Federal wagon train on the Valley Pike linking Strasburg to Winchester. Although many wagons and prisoners were seized, these obstacles coupled with rainstorms, degraded mobility and saved the entire column from capture. Indiscipline and pillaging in the Cavalry were also factors contributing to the failed pursuit.[181]

Jackson then pushed his Infantry columns north in two columns. This was the first time Jackson had to coordinate the movements of separated forces. The eastern column contained two brigades from Ewell's division and took the Front Royal-Winchester Road. The western column consisted of Jackson's three brigades, along with Brigadier General

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[180]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 309.

[181]Jackson's Official Report of Front Royal and Winchester, 10 April 1863, *OR*, 12(1):704.

Richard Taylor's Brigade from Ewell's Division. They travelled along the Valley Pike. The two roads converged at Winchester. Jackson had hoped to initiate battle before Banks reached Winchester and prepared a defense. The situation soon grew confusing for Jackson, though, who travelled with the western wing and had only indirect contact with Ewell. Following a brisk action at Middletown, Jackson penned to Ewell at 4:00 p.m., "Move on Winchester with all the force you have as promptly as possible."[182] However, as the Confederates moved north, a determined action against Jackson's rear columns made him believe he had split Banks force and caused him to reverse his orders to Ewell. At 4:30 p.m., he ordered Ewell to send him one brigade and halt his movement north. This change of direction enabled Banks's Army to achieve separation while confusing Ewell.[183]

After more than an hour of observing the situation, Jackson was finally convinced he was in fact facing only the Federal rear guard. He began moving north toward Winchester with the sun setting. Ewell, having only limited information, grew aggravated at the lack of orders following his halt. He made the decision to begin the movement toward Winchester. Jackson's dispatch at 5:45 p.m., to move toward Winchester, reached Ewell after his movement began and confirmed to Ewell that he understood Jackson's intent. Due to the delaying actions by the Federal rear guard, Banks safely entered Winchester.[184]

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[182]Gary Ecelbarger, *Three Days in the Shenandoah: Stonewall Jackson at Front Royal and Winchester* (Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press, 2008), 125.

[183]Jackson to Ewell, 24 May 1862, *OR*, 12(3):899.

[184]Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 192-93.

After sunset, Jackson met heavy resistance at Newtown, eight miles south of Winchester. For a second time he misread the situation and concluded he had run into the main Federal defenses. Thus, he sent another dispatch to Ewell ordering his entire force to move to Newtown in support. This message to Ewell highlights Jackson's issues in interpreting the situation and set the conditions for a textbook example of a subordinate exercising disciplined initiative. Not only was it dark, but this movement would have taken Ewell hours to execute, and was unlikely to provide Jackson punctual assistance. Fortunately for Jackson, Ewell again exercised disciplined initiative and believing this message outdated when he received it around 8:00 p.m., disregarded it and continued north. Ewell halted for the night two miles south of Winchester at around 10:00 p.m.[185]

Ewell described the confusion of the day by saying, "I received several messages from General Jackson during the night, but as circumstances had in every case changed the condition of things before their arrival, I was forced to follow my own judgment as to General Jackson's intentions."[186] Jackson was unable to directly supervise regimental commanders as he did at Kernstown. Fortunately, Ewell's decision to exercise initiative improved Jackson's position outside of Winchester. Had he followed Jackson's diverging orders throughout the day, the command would have been tangled and disoriented, and likely not in a position to conduct an attack. Jackson owed much to Ewell's tactical

[185]Ecelbarger, *Three Days in the Shenandoah*, 154.

[186]Ewell's Undated Account of the 1862 Valley Campaign, Pfanz, *The Letters of General Richard S. Ewell*, 215.

ability on 25 May. Jackson needed to continue to encourage his trusted subordinate to exercise initiative to secure victory against Banks.[187]

Jackson permitted the army a few hours rest prior to a 26 May sunrise attack on Banks's positions as bad weather caused many stragglers.[188] Although Jackson had misinterpreted enemy actions the previous day, victory was still in his grasp if he could effectively combine the strength of his dispersed force. To do this, he would have to further release control of the battlefield. His simple order to Ewell in the early morning hours of 26 May not only highlighted Jackson's trust in Ewell, but also showed his first encouragement of a subordinate to exercise initiative. Jackson conveyed both his trust and approval to Ewell with few words. He sent him a detailed map of Winchester with orders simply to "Attack at daylight."[189]

Shortly after sunrise, Ewell and Jackson began their attack. Heavy fighting consumed most of the early morning with the Federals retaining the field and no clear advantage gained by either side. Ewell, encouraged by Jackson's orders, exercised disciplined initiative in his sector and continued to press the Federals. Jackson ordered his reserve brigade under Taylor to move west and assault the Federal right flank. Likewise, Ewell maneuvered his reserve regiments into an advantageous position against the Federal left. Taylor succeeded in routing the Union's right flank just as Ewell defeated the extreme Federal left.[190]

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[187]Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 190-92.

[188]Ecelbarger, *Three Days in the Shenandoah*, 171.

[189]Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 193.

[190]Ecelbarger, *Three Days in the Shenandoah*, 206.

From Ewell's position, Taylor's forces rolling up the Union right could be clearly seen. One of his staff officers, Campbell Brown, said of watching Taylor's Brigade assault the enemy works, "It was one of the prettiest things I ever saw, from our point of view."[191] The entire Federal Army was soon retreating through Winchester with Confederates from two converging attacks in full pursuit. Ewell and Jackson had succeeded in pushing through the fog of war to execute a successful operation. Although Jackson was not prone to compliments or embellishment, he described Ewell's attack on the Union left as "executed with skill and spirit."[192] Jackson owed much of his success at Winchester to Ewell's initiative and abilities as a commander.

Although an opportunity to completely destroy Banks's force presented itself, an unfortunate chain of events delayed the Confederate Cavalry pursuit for two hours. Due in large part to this delay, Banks safely crossed the Potomac into Maryland.[193] Although unable to destroy Banks, Jackson had driven him out of the upper valley for the time being. The Valley Army pushed on to the outskirts of Harpers Ferry and was rewarded with a few days of needed rest to recuperate from Front Royal and Winchester.[194] From a larger standpoint, the two victories had improved Jackson's reputation throughout the Confederate Army. The successes of 23-25 May had given his army a feeling of

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[191]Terry L. Jones, ed. *Campbell Brown's Civil War: With Ewell and the Army of Northern Virginia* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 90.

[192]Jackson's Report on Kernstown, Front Royal, and Winchester, 10 April 1863, *OR*, 12(1):705.

[193]Donald R. Jermann, *Civil War Battlefield Orders Gone Awry: The Written word and Its Consequences in 13 Engagements* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2012), 32.

[194]Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 265.

invincibility against any force threatening the valley. The low morale after Romney and firing of Garnett was replaced with jubilation following these consecutive victories. Leaders in Richmond were overjoyed with the liberation of Winchester and Banks's retreat. Lee wired to Jackson on 28 May, "We rejoice at your brilliant success."[195]

Jackson's recapture of Winchester had also significantly influenced decision making in Washington, D.C. Federal officials were unaware of Jackson's true capabilities and feared he would continue north and endanger the Union capital. Lincoln ordered all railroads immediately seized for military use and wrote to McClellan on 25 May saying, "I think the time is near when you either need to attack Richmond or give up the job and come to the defense of Washington."[196] Lincoln also revoked an order to McDowell authorizing him to move his 20,000 man corps to Richmond to support McClellan. McDowell would now remain at Fredericksburg and prepare for operations in the valley. This action by Lincoln, above all others, had achieved Johnston's and Lee's intent and made Jackson's actions in the valley a success.[197]

The resulting confusion in Washington was short lived; initial reports of the extent of the defeat at Winchester were soon amended. Lincoln quickly dispatched Fremont east towards Harrisonburg and ordered two divisions from McDowell's corps to the valley for immediate action against Jackson. The President was very direct with his orders to Fremont: "Much—perhaps all—depends upon the celerity with which you can

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[195]Ecelbarger, *Three Days in the Shenandoah*, 216-17.

[196]Abraham Lincoln, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, NJ: Abraham Lincoln Association, 1953-1955), 5:235-36.

[197]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 412.

execute it. Put the utmost speed into it. Do not lose a minute."[198] McDowell protested the orders to Washington; he believed that by moving further troops into the valley, "He [Jackson] will paralyze a large force with a very small one."[199] Lincoln, however, was unrelenting in his insistence that Jackson needed to be destroyed. Jackson, who had gone as far north as probing the defenses of Harpers Ferry, quickly moved his forces south towards Winchester. Increasingly bad weather caused slow movements for troops and wagons. Jackson understood the gravity of the situation, writing to Boteler, "McDowell and Fremont are probably aiming to affect a junction at Strasburg, so as to head us off from the upper valley, and they are both nearer to it now than we are. Consequently, no time is to be lost."[200] Preceding Jackson's movement through Strasburg, one of Ewell's regiments was surprised when Shields's forces, from McDowell's command, recaptured Front Royal on 30 May 1862, seizing over 150 prisoners from the 12th Georgia.[201]

Lincoln and Stanton had voiced extreme concern over the execution of the operations against Jackson. Both men advocated swift action by Fremont and Shields. Unfortunately for Washington, both men were plagued with indecision and mistakes in nearly every aspect of their operation. Fremont reached a point four miles west of the Valley Turnpike on 1 June, but engaged Ewell's troops so weakly that many

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[198]Lincoln to Fremont, 24 May 1862, *OR*, 12(1):643.

[199]McDowell to Brig. Gen. James Wadsworth, 24 May 1862, *OR*, 12(3):221.

[200]Jackson to Boteler, published in *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, 11 February 1881; Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 416.

[201]Shields Report of Operations 30 May to 9 June 1862, 30 May 1862, *OR*, 12(1):682.

Confederates contemplated it being a trap.[202] Likewise, Shields was concerned about Jackson's numerical superiority and paused at Front Royal for additional reinforcements, enabling Jackson to consolidate at Strasburg and continue moving south.[203]

Jackson penned a report to Johnston on 2 June that outlined his movement south. He discussed that he had been forced to destroy large amounts of medical supplies and ordnance due to lack of transport. He ended by saying, "I will hold myself in readiness to cross the Blue Ridge should you need me."[204] Unknown to Jackson, Johnston had attacked two isolated Federal corps south of the Chickahominy River at the Battle of Seven Pines and had been severely wounded on 31 May. Lee had assumed command of the army and its fight against McClellan on the outskirts of Richmond.[205]

During the week of 30 May to 5 June, the Valley Army moved no less than 100 miles in their attempt to reach safety. Jackson lost over 20 percent of his effective strength due to straggling and sickness. Out of necessity, Jackson was forced to split his army. Ewell remained near Harrisonburg while Jackson moved his columns outside Port Republic. Ashby remained outside Harrisonburg to act as a rear guard. On 6 June, Jackson halted his troops and made headquarters at Port Republic while Ewell's forces stopped only six miles away at Cross Keys. Mutual trust and understanding from victories at Front Royal and Winchester aided in Jackson's confidence of Ewell and his

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[202]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 273-74.

[203]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 419-21.

[204]Jackson to Johnston, 2 June 1862; Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 424.

[205]Dowdey and Manarin, eds., *Wartime Papers*, 179-80.

operational plan. Just prior to the battle, Jackson was deeply saddened to learn of Ashby's death near Harrisonburg on 6 June 1862.[206]

Jackson was surprised on the morning of 8 June by Federal Cavalry that had unexpectedly crossed the river and entered Port Republic. Jackson and his staff scrambled to react to the raiding Federals. Following a heated exchange with Union Cavalry, the lead elements of Shields's columns arrived on the south side of Port Republic. Jackson's artillery began to engage, and without artillery support Shields was forced to fall back. The sound of distant firing signaled to Jackson that Ewell was also engaged with Fremont at Cross Keys.[207]

Jackson had little to fear at Cross Keys. He had delegated the battle to his trusted subordinate and had confidence in his ability to exercise disciplined initiative. Ewell had selected a good defensive position with wooded areas on both flanks that commanded the ground. Although two of Ewell's Brigade commanders were wounded, his superior position held against Fremont's attacks. During a brief disagreement with one of his brigade commanders, Brigadier General Isaac Trimble, Ewell referred him to Jackson for final clarification. Trimble rode to Port Republic and upon describing his position, Jackson replied, "Consult General Ewell and be guided by him."[208] Jackson's trust in Ewell was evident in his response. The shift from his direct and inflexible leadership style at Romney and Kernstown was also clearly evident.

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[206]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 274-79.

[207]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 444-46.

[208]Trimble Report of the 8-9 June Battle of Cross Keys, 11 June 1862, *OR*, 12(1):797-798.

Despite their earlier differences, Ewell now possessed trust in Jackson. He arrived at Jackson's headquarters late on 8 June to give him a full report and discuss plans for the following day. After their discussion, as Ewell and his Cavalry Chief, Colonel Thomas Munford mounted to leave Ewell said, "do you remember my conversation with you at Conrad's Store when I called this old man an old woman? Well, I take it all back! I will never prejudge another man. Old Jackson's no fool. He has a method in his madness."[209]

Early the following morning, 9 June 1862, Union regiments began to deploy for battle on an open plain near Port Republic. The prominent terrain feature was a small spur of the Blue Ridge Mountains used for making charcoal and was thus known as the "Coaling." Jackson had neglected to conduct sufficient reconnaissance and was unaware of the large amount of Union Artillery that was preparing to shell his positions. Shields was not present on the field. The Federal force numbering 3,000 men was under Brigadier General Erastus B. Tyler. Jackson began sending his units to attack piecemeal as only one damaged bridge was available for crossing troops. The first few hours of the battle were bloody for the Confederates as their initial attacks were repulsed by Federal cannons that controlled the field. Late in the morning as the situation grew troublesome, Confederate reinforcements arrived. Ewell had marched his forces away from Cross Keys late the previous day, leaving only Trimble behind as a rear guard. Ewell's lead elements under Taylor's Brigade began arriving on the field. Taylor crossed the river and took position on the right flank near the Coaling to bolster the attack.[210]

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[209]Conversation between Ewell and Munford, 8 June 1862; Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 438.

[210]Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 304-6.

Taylor was bogged down by difficult terrain, but ultimately his troops charged and were soon fighting hand-to-hand with the Federals. Taylor's advance helped to turn the tide. Tyler's line broke near 11:00 a.m. The battle was costly for both sides. Jackson retained the field and had taken 450 prisoners, 800 muskets, and one cannon. In addition, the victory was a combined effort, as Ewell's timely arrival helped defeat the stubborn Union position. Although a Confederate victory, Jackson failed to pursue Tyler and allowed him to retreat north. Fremont arrived near Port Republic late in the afternoon, but proved too late to be of assistance. Both Fremont and Shields retreated back down the valley within days. With the two Union columns in full retreat north, the Valley Campaign ended.[211]

Jackson's Valley Campaign had spanned approximately nine weeks, and saw six battles. When he first arrived in the valley there were little more than militia and scattered cavalry there. Now his army numbered near 17,000 men. Jackson began his actions in the valley as an inflexible leader who demanded blind obedience and maintained direct control over all situations. His early confrontations with Loring and Garnett were indicative of his intolerance of subordinate initiative and inflexibility. Additionally, Jackson routinely neglected to give orders or intent to subordinates and disregarded the need to build mutual trust within his command. In essence, Jackson's early conduct was contrary to all the mission command principles that are being examined in this study.[212]

However, experiences over time seemed to change Jackson. Jackson's communication with Johnston and Lee helped him to understand how his tactical actions

[211]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 443-45.

[212]Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 1-3.

affected the larger strategic objectives of the Confederacy. Additionally, as his campaign progressed, the size of his forces grew, making direct control and supervision on the battlefield unfeasible. Jackson slowly began to show signs of developing cohesive teams through mutual trust, issuing clear commander's intent, and allowing disciplined initiative within his army.[213] The combining of forces with Ewell following the Battle of McDowell acted as a catalyst to mature Jackson's style of leadership, forcing him to decentralize his methods of control and encourage disciplined initiative. Jackson's increased use of mission command principles during the second half of the campaign appear to have helped in achieving his larger objectives. The ability of Jackson and Ewell to transform tactical victories into larger goals for the Confederacy ultimately allowed the Valley Campaign to be a strategic success. Perhaps Jackson's change throughout the campaign was best outlined by his most trusted subordinate. Ewell explained his experience in working for Jackson by saying, "Well, sir, when he commenced it I thought him crazy; before he ended it I thought him inspired."[214]

[213]Jackson's Official Report of Kernstown, 9 April 1862, *OR*, 12(1):382.

[214]Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell*, 220.

CHAPTER 4

THE NORTH AFRICA CAMPAIGN

In February 1941, Major General Erwin Rommel was on leave in Austria after commanding the 7th Panzer Division during the invasion of France. His accomplishments during that campaign were nearly without compare: he pushed his division faster and it captured more territory than any other single division. Known as the "Ghost Division" for its rapid exploits, the unit was officially credited with capturing over 97,000 prisoners and destroying two entire French divisions.[215] Although in command of the 7th Panzer for less than three months before the attack began, he used this time to become familiar with panzer capabilities and doctrine that stressed maneuver and deep penetration. This coincided with the strategic evolution of Operation Plan Yellow, Germany's blueprint for attacking France.[216] The restructured concept ultimately emphasized a German armored spearhead attacking through the Ardennes Forest. For his bravery and abilities during the campaign, Rommel was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross by Hitler.[217]

This however, was not their first meeting. Although the two met briefly when Rommel was a Battalion Commander in 1933, their first real contact was when Colonel Rommel served as the Commandant of the War Academy in Austria in August 1939 and

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[215]Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr., *Rommel's Lieutenants: The Men Who Served the Desert Fox, France, 1940* (London: Praeger Security International, 2007), xi-xii.

[216]John O. Shoemaker, "*Sichelschnitt*, Evolution of an Operation Plan," *Military Review* 42, no. 3 (March 1962), excerpt reprinted in U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, *H501 Readings* (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, October 2012), H501RI-1-6.

[217]Doughty, "The Breaking Point," H501RC-3.

was appointed the commandant of Hitler's special field headquarters during the invasion of Poland.[218] With the position came promotion to Major General. Rommel reported to the *Fuehrer* on the morning of

4 September 1939. They were both in Poland by the end of the day. Although not a combat command, opportunities arose during the course of the campaign for the two to become personally acquainted. The high regard and trust that Hitler developed for Rommel would be more valuable than any command he could have been given.[219]

Hitler and Rommel shared similar views on the necessity of modernizing the army with combat ready armored formations. They disagreed with many general staff officers who preferred an increase of support troops to include engineers, heavy artillery, and intelligence. Although they agreed on issues within the military structure, Rommel did not discuss his personal views outside of this military framework. As a professional military officer, Rommel remained loyal to the teachings of traditional military theorist Antoine-Henri Jomini who stressed separation in the political-military relationship.[220] As such, Rommel was neither a supporter nor advocate of the political ambitions of the greater Nazi Party. Although the two are difficult to separate, Rommel attempted to stay as removed as a senior officer could be from the realities of Hitler's political machine.[221]

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[218]Ralf Georg Reuth, *Rommel: The End of a Legend* (London: Haus Books, 2005), 29-30.

[219]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 127, 138, 151.

[220]John Shy, "Jomini," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 160-62.

[221]Reuth, *Rommel: The End of a Legend*, 35-40.

As Rommel reported to Hitler's Headquarters, there is no doubt he contemplated personal selection for another assignment. On 6 February, Rommel learned he was to command the newly formed German Afrika Korps in Libya. Hitler had agreed to bolster the Italian Tenth Army, then disintegrating at the hands of the British. With the position came promotion to Lieutenant General retroactive to January 1941. Rommel discussed the North Africa situation with Hitler, focusing on British actions during the advance through Cyrenaica. Rommel noted the close integration of British armored, air, and naval assets, but seemingly little was discussed concerning the tyranny of logistics in the theater.[222]

Italy had invaded Libya in October 1911, successfully seized its Northern provinces from the Turks, and annexed them as Italian colonies in early November. The Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, used similar tactics two decades later to invade Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935 and 1936. This expedition drained Italian resources while Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland. Italy formally joined the Axis when it declared war on France and Britain on 10 June 1940.[223] The German campaign in France was nearly complete when Italian units, despite possessing limited capabilities and low morale, invaded French soil. Italy's declaration of war also initiated hostilities in North Africa. British elements garrisoned in Egypt attacked Italian positions in Libya a few days

[222]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 213-17.

[223]Brian R. Sullivan, "The Strategy of the Decisive Weight: Italy, 1882-1922," in *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War*, eds. Alvin Bernstein, MacGregor Knox, and Williamson Murray (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 324-26.

later.[224] Although not part of the larger German strategy to control Europe, Hitler inadvertently became linked to North Africa with the addition of the Italians into the Axis alliance.

Rommel had been chosen to lead the Afrika Korps due in large part to the offensive spirit and initiative he demonstrated during World War I and the French Campaign in 1940. These attributes helped achieve German victories and are partly what endeared him to Hitler. Erwin Johannes Eugen Rommel was born on 15 November 1891, east of Stuttgart in the city of Heidenheim, Germany. He was the second of four children born to Erwin Rommel and Helene von Luz. Although Rommel's father served as an Artillery Officer prior to the turn of the century, an extensive military tradition did not exist within the family. There was, however, an esteemed German tradition of military service felt by all young men, including Rommel. At age 19, he looked to join the army on a year tour as a candidate for a commission. With no vacancies available in the artillery or engineers, Rommel reported to the 124th Wurttemberg Infantry Regiment in July 1910 as a cadet. Following training with the regiment, the unit's leadership felt he was ready to proceed to Danzig to undertake training for commission as an officer. Rommel applied himself to his studies, and after successful completion of the eight month curriculum, became a lieutenant of Infantry in January 1912. In addition to a commission, in Danzig he also met Lucy Mollin, the woman soon to become his wife and lifelong confidante.[225]

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[224]Pietro Badoglio, *Italy in the Second World War: Memories and Documents*, trans. Muriel Currey (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 22.

[225]Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr., *Triumphant Fox: Erwin Rommel and The Rise of the Afrika Korps* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1984), 27-29.

As Rommel reported for duty as an officer, tensions built throughout Europe. International friction and social unrest resulted in expansionist foreign policies and continued an era of colonialism by the eastern empires of Austria, Serbia, and Italy.[226] Over the next two years, Rommel trained with units around Germany and learned his profession. During this period Rommel learned that decentralized decision making and initiative by empowered junior leaders could achieve success on the battlefield. Upon the outbreak of World War I, he returned to his regiment and prepared to move to the Western Front. Rommel's Regiment was part of the German Fifth Army, commanded by Imperial Crown Prince Wilhelm. This force was positioned south of Luxembourg in August 1914 and was to hold the line as units to the north enveloped the French Army. As the conflict developed, deviations from the original Schleiffen plan caused a weakened right wing and contributed to the deadly trench warfare struggle and mass casualties of the Western Front.[227]

During World War I, Rommel learned the importance of terrain and intelligence in an effective maneuver plan. Rommel incorporated these lessons with the German tradition of decentralized control and decision making advocated by Moltke the Elder. He led platoon, company, and small battalion sized detachments, and frequently demonstrated disciplined initiative. In September 1914, near Verdun, Rommel conducted a reconnaissance of enemy positions and made contact with a French patrol. In close proximity to the French, and after expending his ammunition, Rommel personally

[226]Gunther E. Rothenberg, "Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 317-18.

[227]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 22-23.

charged the enemy with only his bayonet. Although severely wounded, the initiative shown in this episode was indicative of his offensive spirit.[228]

Rommel also learned important tactical lessons while leading his unit in multiple theaters. Germany attempted to counter superior Allied manpower by routinely shifting units between frontlines. Due to this, Rommel's unit was repeatedly moved between distant geographical sectors. This allowed him to experience combat in many regions, including Belgium, France, Romania, and Italy. Although Rommel was present at the Battle of Verdun in 1916, his unit's assignment to the mountainous regions of Italy and Romania enabled him to break free from the defensive trench warfare doctrine.[229]

Rommel's key experience of World War I occurred in October 1917 near Mount Matajur, in the Italian Alps, as part of the Battle of Caporetto. The Italian troops that Rommel faced in 1917 were exhausted, possessed low morale, and were without proper equipment or ammunition. They had endured years of mistreatment at the hands of incompetent leaders who controlled the army with rigid centralized authority.[230] In a two day action near Longarone, Rommel employed bold movements and his superior ability to maneuver, infiltrating the Italian defenses with his small composite battalion, which caused the surrender of over 9,000 Italian troops, along with 81 guns. During these actions Rommel presented himself to the enemy commander, and demanded surrender by portraying that his unit had the enemy surrounded. His initiative had paid dividends by

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[228]Erwin Rommel, *Infantry Attacks* (London: Greenhill Books, 1990), 48-49.

[229]Ronald Lewin, *Rommel as a Military Commander* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1969), 3-6.

[230]Sullivan, "The Strategy of the Decisive Weight," 338-40.

saving the lives of his men and reducing Italian troop strength in the region. Rommel's actions were indicative of the flexibility and initiative that was an integral part of German Military doctrine since the introduction of *Auftragstaktik* in the mid-nineteenth century. Although this initiative was restricted by the demands of trench warfare of 1915 and 1916, empowered leaders like Rommel enabled the philosophy to again reach its full potential. For his achievements during this multi-day action, Rommel was awarded the highly coveted *Pour le Merite*.[231]

The end of the "Great War" and Versailles Treaty limited the German Officer Corps to 4,000 authorized positions, a significant decrease from wartime levels. General Hans von Seeckt as Chief of the General Staff ensured that careful retention selections were made to maximize talent and intellect and not simply noble lineage. Due to the small size of the *Reichswehr*, considerable effort was made to ensure that quality officers were retained and made experts in battlefield operations.[232] Although the German General Staff Corps was specifically outlawed, special emphasis was placed on these qualified officers to retain German Military culture. Rommel was held in high regard for his actions during the war and this helped to ensure that he was retained. During this period, Rommel successfully commanded both a rifle and machine gun company. During the interwar years, the *Reichswehr* taught Rommel many doctrinal principles that shaped his leadership over the next few decades. *Leadership and Combat of Combined Arms Forces* was published in 1921 and eventually expanded into the doctrine of

[231]Rommel, *Infantry Attacks*, 225-26.

[232]Williamson Murray, "Armored Warfare: The British, French and German Experiences," in *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, eds. Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 38-40.

Truppenfuhrung, released in 1932. These documents advocated the use of firepower and maneuver and were instrumental in developing Rommel's leadership during World War II.[233]

During the interwar years Rommel was praised by his superiors for his tactical and technical abilities, although he never applied to the War Academy. Rommel's skill and passion was for leading combat units at the front, not for strategic thought. Nonetheless, he was assigned as an Instructor at the Infantry School in Dresden in 1929. For his performance, Rommel was given command of an elite *Jaeger* Battalion in 1933. This unit continued the historic *Jaeger* tradition of German Light Infantry and focused on mountain warfare and alpine training.[234]

In 1937, while Commander of the Infantry School, Rommel published a compilation of tactical lessons from World War I in, *Infantry Attacks* (*Infanterie Grieft an*). It highlighted lessons at the platoon and company level and was written in sufficient detail to allow comprehensive study by junior leaders. Rommel, in his original foreword, declared, "this book should make a contribution towards perpetuating those experiences of the bitter war years; experiences often gained at the cost of great deprivations and bitter sacrifice."[235] Although not overly popular when first published in Germany, as Rommel's reputation grew, so did the visibility of his writings. Following his successes in France and North Africa, the book was translated and distributed throughout many western countries by 1943. It remains a frequently referenced source by military leaders

[233]Williamson Murray, "May 1940," 158-60.

[234]Dennis E. Showalter, *Patton and Rommel*, 137-47.

[235]Rommel, *Infantry Attacks*, xv.

to highlight lessons of maneuver warfare at the tactical level. Although the book documents Rommel's frontline leadership style and decentralized decision making, little is discussed about delegation to subordinates or encouraging initiative in others.[236]

Rommel's first Field Command in World War II was the 7th Panzer Division during the invasion of France. His achievements in this position were unparalleled. Rommel achieved much of his success in France by employing the same offensive spirit that proved successful for him in Italy in 1917. He constantly pushed his units further to maintain momentum and keep the enemy off balance. In the process, units lost contact and were frequently vulnerable to counterattack. Rommel has been criticized by historians for being so focused on speed and initiative that he lost awareness of unit locations and was unable to consolidate quickly if ordered to do so.[237] Rommel also frequently moved forward and lost contact with his headquarters. This left his Chief of Staff, Major Otto Heidkeamper, in a precarious situation without orders or intent from the commander. Fortunately for Rommel, his Corps Commander, General Hermann Hoth, was tolerant of Rommel's actions due to his success.[238]

Another critique of Rommel's actions was that although he advocated and exercised initiative, he often overruled subordinate commanders and personally took control. At one point during the Meuse River crossing in May 1940, Rommel bypassed the chain of command and took direct control of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Rifle Regiment because he felt the speed of the operation was unsatisfactory. After giving orders to unit

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[236]Ibid., xi.

[237]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 176-79.

[238]Mitcham, *Rommel's Lieutenants*, 142-43.

commanders, Rommel crossed the river in one of the first boats and ensured defensive positions were sufficient. Once complete, he re-crossed and continued north. Later in the day, Rommel gave direct orders to an Engineer Officer from the 6th Rifle Regiment to modify his bridge to support Panzers and personally assisted in its construction. Although proactive and enthusiastic in his actions, Rommel's initiative often focused on tactical events when larger operational decisions required his management. Rommel would face similar challenges in Africa.[239]

Upon receiving his appointment to Command the Afrika Korps on 6 February 1941, Rommel began making plans with his typical enthusiasm and vigor. The coalition environment in Africa required that Rommel conduct personal meetings in Rome with Italian officials in hopes of building a cohesive team. The command relationship was a peculiar one: Rommel commanded Italian troops in Africa, but was subordinate to Marshal Italo Gariboldi, the newly appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Army in North Africa, and would require his approval for operations involving Italian forces.[240] The fact that Italy had the predominance of forces in the theater and had fundamental differences concerning the use of speed and initiative would present special challenges for this coalition. Rommel however, retained the right to consult with the German High Command, *Oberkommando des Heers* (known as OKH) or to Hitler himself, should the orders from his Italian superiors prove unsatisfactory.[241]

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[239]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 169-72.

[240]Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr., *Rommel's Greatest Victory: The Desert Fox and the Fall of Tobruk, Spring 1942* (Navato, CA: Presidio Press, 1998), 16.

[241]Badoglio, *Italy in the Second World War*, 24-25.

One of the difficulties encountered by the German-Italian Coalition was that the two regimes had significantly different strategic objectives in Africa. Mussolini had grandiose plans for continued imperialist expansion. As previously discussed, Italy had possessed colonies in Libya since before World War I, and Mussolini had seized additional territory in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1936, as well as Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. He had intentions to ultimately gain possession of Kenya and British Somaliland. Mussolini was focused on Africa with only secondary emphasis on mainland Europe. However, Mussolini's objectives for defeating the British on the African Continent were far outside the scope of what his military was able to achieve.[242] In contrast, Hitler was almost entirely focused on German control of mainland Europe and with a decisive focus on the Soviet Union in the east. To achieve this, in early 1941, Germany was planning an attack on the Soviet Union and was less seriously contemplating a ground invasion of Great Britain. North Africa remained a sideshow and was a distant supporting effort for Hitler's objectives by keeping Italy from being defeated. Although Hitler intervened to show support for Italy and Mussolini, in reality, North Africa quickly became a drain on limited German manpower and resources.[243]

Britain, in contrast, also retained a number of vital strategic interests in the region. They not only required continued access to Middle East oil, but the Suez Canal as well. Loss of Suez would force Britain to extend the sea lines of communication around the Cape of Good Hope and strangle a nation virtually reliant on shipping. The British had

[242]MacGregor Knox, "Italy's Armed Forces: 1940-3," in *Military Effectiveness, Volume 3: The Second World War*, eds. Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 143-47.

[243]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 213-17.

signed the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 which allowed British troops to enter Egypt if the Suez was in danger. Following the declaration of war by the Italians and initiation of hostilities in 1940, the British gathered troops for Egypt's defense. Egypt also served as an intermediate point between Great Britain and elements of the Empire in India and Asia. In a real sense, the loss of Egypt and the Suez Canal would have cut the British Empire in half, diminishing access to vital resources.[244]

When Rommel landed near Tripoli, Libya on 12 February 1941, the situation was dire for the Italians. The defeats of the preceding months were only the latest setbacks for the Italian Military. Moreover, Italy maintained deeply rooted social and economic problems which served to produce a weakened military structure. Within the government, corruption was commonplace and the military was filled with uninspired and conformist leadership. Additionally, Italian industrial capabilities were underdeveloped and could not support extended wartime production.[245] Most recently, the last three months had seen the incompetently led Italian Tenth Army routed and all but destroyed. In Rome, Mussolini seemed unconcerned that his troops in North Africa were armed with antiquated and inferior weapons and suffered from low morale. Many Italian units were not motorized and dependent upon marching as their only mobility. Many Italian Military leaders felt that although Italy wanted to be a player in this theater, they had outfitted and equipped their military only enough to function as a colonial police force. Although

[244]Ibid., 219.

[245]Knox, "Italy's Armed Forces," 140-42.

General Rodolfo Graziani, Commander-in-Chief of the Italian General Staff, was aware of the limitations of his units, demands from Mussolini made his position precarious.[246]

Following limited action against British troops during June 1940, Mussolini decided to attack the British in Egypt. On threat of being relieved, Graziani had executed Mussolini's order to attack on 13 September 1940, capturing the Egyptian coastal town of Sidi Barrani. However, following this action the Italians stopped cold for nearly three months.[247] British units defending Egypt were underequipped and inadequately manned due to the threat of a British mainland attack and losses from Dunkirk. Thus, the invasion of Egypt caused serious concern for the British leadership. During the extended pause at Sidi Barrani, they strengthened their forces for a counter attack. During this time, Hitler began active discussions with Italy concerning German assistance and sent a liaison officer to Africa. Mussolini, however, remained confident in Italian success and declined German support for the time being.[248]

The newly organized British force, under General Sir Archibald Wavell, massed a modern force of 31,000 soldiers with significant armor, artillery and aircraft. In contrast, Graziani's 250,000 Italian troops manned hasty defensive positions in Libya with limited logistical support. The British believed they would need this force just to push the Italians out of Egypt. In reality, over the next few weeks, the British would nearly throw the Italians off the continent.[249] When Wavell attacked Sidi Barrani on 9 December as part of

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[246]Mitcham, *Triumphant Fox*, 19-20.

[247]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 99-100.

[248]Mitcham, *Triumphant Fox*, 20-21.

[249]Ibid., 21.

Operation COMPASS, the Italians were shockingly unprepared. The battle lasted merely an hour before resistance collapsed, with the capture of 39,000 Italians. The British continued their pursuit with victories at Bardia on 3 January and Tobruk on 21 January. The Italian Infantry was nearly defenseless, relegated to the coastal road, and vulnerable.[250] The British eventually halted their operations in western Libya on 8 February, with only the Italian stronghold of Tripoli holding out. In two months British forces had captured over 130,000 men and more than 400 Italian tanks. Rommel wrote of the situation, "In fact no further serious resistance by the Italians was to be expected. It was not impossible that the next few days would see the arrival of the leading British troops in the outer environs of Tripoli."[251]

Hitler viewed assistance in North Africa as a modest investment to keep the Italians in the war and harass the British. There was no argument that Italy would remain the predominant combatant and retain nominal authority over Axis strategy in Africa. Although not equipped and trained for major offensive operations, it was also believed that an Italian presence in Greece and the Balkans would allow German forces to concentrate elsewhere. A secure North Africa also offered Hitler a protected flank for continued action in Europe. Following their success in France, the German High Command had mixed opinions about their next operation. Some favored a direct attack on Britain. Others believed that bolstering the Italians in North Africa would strengthen the resolve of the Vichy French, while indirectly attacking the British where they were

[250]Jonathan M. House, *Toward Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20th Century Tactics, Doctrine and Organization* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1984), 91.

[251]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 99.

vulnerable. Successful operations in North Africa could also result in extended British sea lines of communication. If the Suez Canal was captured, a stranglehold would be possessed over British petroleum imports. Although these objectives sounded appealing to Italian and German leaders, it proved a logistical impossibility for both nations.[252]

Many panzer units were on occupation duty in France during the winter of 1940 and 1941. Employing them in North Africa would have the effect of diverting attention away from the stockpile of material in preparation for the attack on the Soviet Union. Although opinions were not universal, the majority of leaders nonetheless agreed that from a small investment in troops and material, large strategic rewards could be gained.[253] This reflected a lack of strategic thought by German leadership. The volume of manpower and supplies necessary for Africa would ultimately drain needed combat power from Europe. Nonetheless, Hitler signed the order approving German intervention in North Africa as Operation SUNFLOWER on 5 February 1941. He sent a personal note to Mussolini on 28 February that said, "I am very grateful to you, Duce, for the fact that you have placed your motorized units at the disposal of General Rommel. He will not let you down and I am convinced that in the near future he will have won the loyalty and, I hope, the affection of your troops. I believe that the mere arrival of the first Panzer Regiment will represent an exceptional reinforcement of your position."[254]

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[252]Martin Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War: World War II in North Africa, 1941-1943* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3-4, 40-41.

[253]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 220-21.

[254]Young, *Rommel, The Desert Fox*, 63.

Due to preparations for the invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler allocated only two divisions to Rommel, the 5th Light (later 21st Panzer) and the 15th Panzer Division. The German forces that were selected for Africa were highly regarded and well equipped formations with experienced personnel. Although they maintained the high level of discipline present in most German formations in 1941, they received little special training or equipment for the desert. Their vehicles were sufficiently armored, but they were designed for operations in central Europe, not North African deserts. While Rommel conducted reconnaissance operations in mid-February, combat forces began arriving in Tripoli. Although this continued throughout February and March, his armored formations were not completely on hand until the end of May.[255]

In addition to the small force at his disposal, Rommel also had a disadvantage in intelligence during the initial weeks of his buildup. Rommel expected to oppose the same formations that destroyed the Italians. He was unaware of the organizational changes that occurred as part of British strategy following the capture of Benghazi in January.[256] Following Wavell's success during the first weeks of 1941, Great Britain altered its posture in North Africa. Many of the veteran units that participated in Wavell's offensive were replaced with untrained troops to enable seasoned units to reinforce operations in Greece. Many of the armor units were below requisite strength and transport vehicles

[255]Lewin, *Rommel as Military Commander*, 30-31.

[256]Hans-Otto Behrendt, *Rommel's Intelligence in the Desert Campaign, 1941-1943* (London: William Kimber and Co., 1985), 66-67.

were in short supply. Although Rommel prepared to receive continued attacks; British orders were to consolidate gains and transition to the defensive.[257]

During his first weeks in Libya, Rommel began to understand the difficult task he inherited. The desert was unforgiving and would be a formidable obstacle to sustaining life, not to mention armored warfare. Rommel conducted aerial reconnaissance with his staff to better understand the terrain and importance of logistical support. Nothing could be foraged from the land: all logistics would come from either enemy or friendly stocks. The other critical aspect was that as he moved further east, his supplies must also travel further distances, thereby straining his motorized transport. As Rommel contemplated the logistical requirements of this theater, he lamented, "The Italians had unfortunately never built a railway along the coast. It would have been of immense value."[258]

Rommel also began to make decisions concerning the leadership of the Afrika Korps. He wanted to build a cohesive team around a cadre of able subordinates that had served him well in France. This led Rommel to send requests to Berlin for key personnel. Rommel asked for leaders that had proven they lived up to his high standards. Due to Rommel's influence in Berlin, Colonel Johann Michel and Lieutenant Colonel Eduard Crasemann were transferred from France in May 1941 to take Command of the 155th Rifle Regiment (21st Panzer Division) and the 33rd Motorized Artillery Regiment (15th Panzer Division) respectively.[259] Rommel continued to request trusted officers in January

[257]Lewin, *Rommel as Military Commander*, 28-29.

[258]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 103.

[259]Mitcham, *Rommel's Lieutenants*, 113-16, 147-51. In an amazing display of bravery, Michel was later captured by New Zealand forces in November 1941, but led a

1942, asking for Major General Georg von Bismarck to Command the 21st Panzer Division. All of these men were capable and aggressive regimental and battalion commanders. Rommel's desire to build a cohesive team is highlighted by his effort to fill key leadership positions with officers that he trusted. These leaders would help ensure trust and teamwork were present within the Afrika Korps and that Rommel had subordinates who understood and shared his offensive spirit.[260]

The 5th Panzer Regiment of the 5th Light Division completed offloading at Tripoli on

11 March 1941. Rommel was given unambiguous direction by *Oberkommando des Heers* that his units were to only bolster Italian morale and capabilities, and not to conduct large offensive operations. It was further prescribed that he wait for the entire 15th Panzer Division before conducting limited attacks near Agedabia and possibly Benghazi. Although Hitler's intent was clear, Rommel believed that giving the British time to strengthen their position was not tactically sound. Waiting another two months for the entire 15th Panzer Division would, he believed, result in additional casualties and loss of resources. Thus, Rommel decided to exercise initiative and attack with only some of his mechanized formations present. He reasoned that since the intent was to operate against Agedabia in May, this attack could be justified as being preparatory in nature for the May offensive. Although risky to disobey explicit orders, Rommel had recently been in Berlin

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group of POWs who overwhelmed their guards and were able to reach German lines. For this act he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

[260]Ibid., 91-93.

on 19 March, to receive the Oak Leaves to his Knight's Cross and was aware of his favor with Hitler.[261]

During the initial operations in Cyrenaica, Rommel undertook deliberate teambuilding efforts, while ensuring subordinates understood his intent for the upcoming operation. When the 5th Panzer Regiment from the 5th Light Division arrived in Tripoli, Rommel gathered all its officers to personally issue his intent. He focused on the importance of bolstering their Italian Allies while defending against British attacks until they could build combat power. This interaction made Rommel's priorities clear, and ensured cohesive teams were forming within his new army.[262]

On 31 March 1941, Rommel attacked east towards Mersa el Brega. His formation included one Panzer Regiment, reconnaissance elements from the 5th Light Division, as well as two Italian Infantry and one armored division. Although the Italian forces were poorly equipped, Rommel had sufficient force to maneuver along multiple avenues. As expected, he caught the British completely off guard, without sufficient reserves or a plan of retreat. The 5th Light Division led the attack and after a few hours of fighting Rommel maneuvered to exploit his success. The 8th Machine Gun Battalion rapidly captured the Mersa el Brega defile. A hasty British retreat had caused 50 Bren Carriers and 30 Lorries to fall into Axis hands.[263]

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[261]Showalter, *Patton and Rommel*, 227-31.

[262]Heinz Werner Schmidt, *With Rommel in the Desert* (London: George G. Harrap and Co., 1951), 13-14.

[263]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 107-08.

Success encouraged Rommel to continue to push the British. Rommel believed that overwhelming success, in Hitler's eyes, would make up for any sins. Rommel outlined in his report of the Cyrenaica Campaign, "It was a chance I could not resist and I gave orders for Agedabia to be attacked and taken, in spite of the fact that our instructions were not to undertake any such operation before the end of May."[264] On 2 April, following moderate fighting, the British continued to relinquish terrain. Agedabia and the surrounding area fell into Axis hands. On 3 April, German reconnaissance elements entered Benghazi and found both a warm welcome from the local populace and British supplies ablaze. As Rommel's forces pushed east, he was visited by Gariboldi. He rebuked Rommel for disobeying the defensive orders from Rome. The conversation quickly became heated between the two Generals. Although vindicated when Rommel received a message from Berlin granting him full authority for his offensive, this event did little to strengthen mutual trust within the coalition. Rommel described the communique from Hitler in a letter to his wife on 4 April, "Congratulations have come from the *Fuerher* for the unexpected success, plus a directive for further operations which is in full accord with my own ideas. Our territory is expanding and now we can maneuver."[265] Rommel had correctly assessed both British dispositions and Hitler's reaction, and effectively used initiative to achieve early success. He now possessed something he never had in France, and that few German commanders would achieve during the war—permission for operations in an independent theater.[266]

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[264]Ibid., 109.

[265]Ibid., 112.

[266]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 76-77.

The surprise his attack achieved was complete. One British officer later complained, "Certainly Rommel should not have dared to attack us as soon as he did."[267] The coastal road was soon flooded with retreating British vehicles. The 3rd Armoured Brigade, one of the strongest British tank units, lost much of its fuel reserve and was virtually destroyed as a fighting unit, as it was forced to abandon many of its vehicles. [268] The remainder of the 2nd Armoured Division was destroyed during operations near El Mechili on 8 April. Rommel's rapid assault also captured key British leaders, including General Richard O'Connor, who had recently defeated the Italians, and his immediate subordinate, Lieutenant General Philip Neame.[269] Interrogation of British prisoners revealed that there were rumors of an entire German Panzer Corps attacking in Cyrenaica. Axis formations were finally checked outside of Tobruk due to strong British fortified positions and a stubborn defense by the 9th Australian Division during 12-14 April.[270]

Although Rommel achieved early success through initiative, his tactical and operational victories did not equate to strategic victory. Hitler's orders to bolster the Italian effort intended for Italy to remain in the lead with an economy of force effort from Germany. Rommel's ambitious actions and overanxious movements required increasingly more supplies and troops, which ultimately detracted from the larger objectives in central and Eastern Europe. In one instance when Rommel went to Berlin to

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[267]Young, *Rommel, The Desert Fox*, 75.

[268]Mitcham, *Rommel's Desert Commanders*, 18-19.

[269]Showalter, *Patton and Rommel*, 231.

[270]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 234.

advocate for additional troops and supplies in March 1941, he argued this matter with General Franz Halder, Chief of the German General Staff. When Halder questioned how he would supply these additional troops, Rommel replied, "I don't give a damn! That's your problem."[271] When viewed in this context, although Rommel's initiative was applauded in the short term, his ideas were not congruent with Germany's strategic goals and repeatedly committed finite resources to a secondary theater of war.[272]

Amidst his tactical success, Rommel received criticism for repeating many of his errors in France. He pushed his units farther than was tactically prudent, causing vehicle breakdowns and units to get lost in the desert. These actions imperiled his fighting force and left it vulnerable to counterattack. In one instance, units of the 5th Light Division reported that breakdowns and fuel shortages forced them to pause for four days. After Rommel gave explicit orders to the division that only fuel would be transported for the next 24 hours, the shortage was quickly remedied. Rommel understood the risks inherent in rapid operations. But, just as he had in France, he pushed his units vigorously and expected them to be resourceful and adaptive. Rommel described his expectations of his subordinates by saying,

> The sole criterion for a commander in carrying out a given operation must be the time he is allowed for it, and he must use all of his powers of execution to fulfill the task within the time. I had not demanded too much on the march to Mechili; this was shown by the fact that commanders who used their initiative had achieved what I asked. A Commander's drive and energy often count more than his intellectual powers—a fact that is not generally understood by academic soldiers, although for the practical man it is self-evident.[273]

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[271]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 65.

[272]Ibid., 64-66.

[273]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 119.

Rommel again ensured his subordinates were effectively employing the philosophy of *Auftragstaktik*. He expected subordinates to use initiative as he did and execute his orders vigorously to achieve success.[274]

One of Rommel's own staff officers, Major Friedrich von Mellenthin, described him as, "not an easy man to serve."[275] Officers who failed to lead with initiative and offensive spirit did not gain Rommel's favor and were replaced. Major General Johannes Streich, Commander of the 5th Light Division, disapproved of the plan of attack on Tobruk and thought Rommel highly egocentric. Rommel later wrote about the incident, "the 5th Light Division had lost confidence in itself and was unwarrantedly pessimistic about my plan to open our main plan of attack on the 14th [of April]. The Division's command had not mastered the art of concentrating its strength at one point, forcing a break-through, rolling up, and securing the flanks on either side and then penetrating like lightning."[276] As a result, Streich, as well as a handful of battalion and regimental commanders, were replaced.

Rommel succeeded in pushing the Allies across the desert nearly 1,000 miles and exceeded the initial objectives set for him. He ambitiously proclaimed to his staff on 10 April, "Our objective is to be made known to every man; it is the Suez Canal."[277] Although an ambitious goal, he gave no explanation of how this would serve larger German strategic goals or how this plan would be logistically supported. Based on his

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[274]Widder, "*Auftragstaktik*," H501RA-2.

[275]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 127.

[276]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 123-24.

[277]Behrendt, *Rommel's Intelligence*, 76.

prior comment to Halder only a month earlier concerning logistics, the feasibility of this goal is called into question. Additionally, this was clearly outside the purpose given to him by Berlin and Rome, showing his misunderstanding or disregard for his superior's intent. However, a number of factors combined to halt Rommel's forces outside of Tobruk and prevented him from reaching the Suez Canal. Rommel had far exceeded Rome's wishes and was outside of the intent of the operation. Rommel also began to have issues with his subordinates. They believed that largely due to excess haste, the attacks against Tobruk's defenses were uncoordinated and had little chance at success. In the first days of April, the 15th Panzer Division began unloading and moving to the front. On their first mission, the Division Commander, Major General Heinrich von Prittwitz was killed. From a logistics perspective, Rommel was angry that the Italians did not shift to using the port of Benghazi, which was captured on 3 April. With no rail lines available, his trucks were required to conduct movements of nearly 1,000 miles to support forward units.[278]

Rommel continued to directly engage with subordinates throughout the Cyrenaica Operation. His offensive spirit required him to be at the decisive point of the operation to understand the situation. Rommel frequently located his command vehicles with the lead elements of an attacking column and conducted his own aerial reconnaissance, often landing unannounced to clarify orders with subordinates.[279] Rommel's acting Chief of Staff, Colonel Fritz Bayerlein, remembered only one occasion during the campaign when

[278]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 243-44.

[279]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 112.

orders for a major operation were not verbally issued by Rommel himself. Ensuring his orders were received and understood was Rommel's way.[280]

Although Rommel preferred to issue orders directly, rapidly changing situations forced him to issue written orders to subordinates at times. However, even when he was forced to issue written orders, they provided clear commander's intent. In one example, an intelligence update led Rommel to alter an objective for the 5th Light Division during the attack into Cyrenaica in April 1941. Rommel wrote the following clarification order to the commander: "Mechili clear of enemy. Make for it. Drive Fast. Rommel."[281] Although not issued in person, Rommel made his intent clear and Mechili was captured.

However, many subordinates did not appreciate Rommel's leadership tactics and felt his constant presence micromanaged leaders and stifled initiative, in violation of the philosophy of *Auftragstaktik* and mission command.[282] Just as Rommel had become directly involved in tactical actions by taking command of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Rifle Regiment during the Meuse River crossing in May 1940, Rommel showed these same inclinations during April 1941. In one instance during the offensive through Cyrenaica, Rommel personally gathered, and then delivered; every fuel can in the vicinity of his headquarters to an Italian Artillery column that was incapable of reaching a position to support a German attack. In another, Rommel became so fixated on finding the 5th Panzer Regiment while on reconnaissance in his storch aircraft that he mistakenly landed

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[280]Ibid., 160. Rommel's Papers do not contain a written account of the winter campaign of 1941-42. Lieut. Gen. Fritz Bayerlein wrote an account based on documents and personal experience.

[281]Ibid., 107-16.

[282]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 100-01.

in the middle of a British column and narrowly escaped capture. These actions seem more fitting for an officer of less responsibility and give credibility to the claims of his micro-management.[283]

With Rommel at the limit of his operational reach outside Tobruk, the British were able to consolidate and mount a counterattack. The British attacked Rommel's defensive positions outside of Tobruk on 15 May 1941. From signals intercepts using ULTRA, the British knew of the arrival of the 15th Panzer Division and wanted to drive Rommel from Tobruk before he could strengthen his positions. Elements of 15th Panzer arrived in time to assist in defeating the attack. Both commands remained reliant on sea lines of communication. The British attack was enabled by a large convoy that arrived in Alexandria, Egypt on 12 May, and included 240 tanks to bolster the 7th Armoured Division, which had been without proper equipment since February.[284]

The British again attacked in the morning hours of 15 June under the codename Operation BATTLEAXE. Due to superior signals intercept and lax British communications security, Rommel knew of the impending attack and prepared accordingly. He incorporated the first 88mm flak units to arrive into his anti-tank screen and camouflaged them effectively, enabling accurate long range fire against British Armor. The 88s would prove invaluable as anti-tank weapons in the coming months.[285] The British attack was defeated and Rommel counterattacked the next morning to capture Halfaya Pass, 40 miles east of Tobruk.

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[283]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 233-35.

[284]Ibid., 256.

[285]Young, *Rommel, The Desert Fox*, 76-77.

Rommel ordered both the 5th Light and 15th Panzer Divisions to move against Halfaya Pass. After a determined fight with heavy tank losses on both sides, German armored units pushed into Egypt on 17 June and seized Sidi Suleiman and the Halfaya Pass. Rommel hoped his victories would encourage Berlin and Rome to refocus on protecting Mediterranean shipping lanes, and provide him more supplies and reinforcements. However, within a week the strategic situation in Europe would be significantly different.[286]

As Rommel was on the doorstep of Tobruk, events began to unfold elsewhere that altered the war in North Africa. The Third Reich had gathered the spoils of war from its successes in 1939 and 1940 and concentrated them on the Eastern Front. On 22 June 1941, Hitler broke his 1939 non-aggression pact with Joseph Stalin and launched Operation BARBAROSSA, an attack on the Soviet Union, with 145 divisions and over three million men. Senior leaders in Berlin envisioned victory in a matter of weeks, much like the earlier campaigns against Poland and France. Few envisioned the costly battles that would eventually bleed Germany dry of men and material. With the attack into the Soviet Union as the decisive operation in German strategy, Rommel should have limited his objectives and resource usage in accordance with these requirements. Instead, he continued to request troops and supplies for operations that were largely outside of Hitler's intent.[287]

Following the victory at Halfaya Pass, Axis Forces modified their composition and command structure. Rommel redesignated the 5th Light Division, the 21st Panzer

[286]Showalter, *Patton and Rommel*, 240.

[287]Murray, "The World in Conflict," 333-34.

Division, and created the 90th Light Division out of German units already in North Africa. Rommel now commanded three German Divisions and exercised informal control over the Italian X and XXI Corps, bringing his total force to nine divisions.[288] British defeats during June angered leaders in London and led them to replace Wavell with General Sir Claude Auchinleck. Affectionately known as "The Auk," he most recently was the Commander-in Chief of the British Indian Army. Auchinleck inherited the stalemate outside of Tobruk as well as pressure from London to initiate an offensive to push Rommel out of Egypt. The rules of the desert applied to all commanders equally: Auchinleck would have to await resupply before beginning an offensive.[289]

The string of victories across Cyrenaica transformed Rommel into a national hero. His arrival in North Africa, in February 1941 coincided with the release of a film by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels entitled *Victory in the West*. Rommel himself starred in the movie, which outlined his exploits during the French Campaign. The film became an overnight sensation in Berlin.[290] Rommel's ambitious and rapid attacks also had a psychological impact on the Allied leadership. Auchinleck published a directive in late 1941 that forbid his troops from using Rommel's name when referring to the enemy for fear of amplifying his stature. He directed that they call the enemy "the Germans" or "Axis Powers." He later explained that he issued the directive because he, "thought [it] necessary to send to my commanders in the field when the name of Rommel was

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[288]Mitcham, *Rommel's Greatest Victory*, 18-19.

[289]Robin Adair, *British Eight Army North Africa, 1940-1943* (New York: Arco Publishing Company, 1974), 5-6.

[290]Reuth, *Rommel: The End of a Legend*, 130-31.

acquiring almost magical properties in the minds of our soldiers. An enemy commander does not gain a reputation of this sort unless he is out of the ordinary and Rommel certainly was exceptional."[291]

Although Rommel remained an inspiration to his units, the morale of his front line troops wavered. Due to relentless fighting and the expanse of the desert, leaves were infrequent and the physical hardships of desert warfare took their toll. Rommel's continued favor with Hitler earned his unit the new designation of Panzer Group Afrika. Although no significant fighting occurred from July through October 1941, Rommel continued to train his units on the integration of combined arms and anti-tank screens.[292]

In the meantime, the problem of desert logistics became clear. Rommel was in a war of exhaustion with the British that Germany could not win. The Italian Navy was unable to deliver the resources required to keep the Axis Forces sustained. British Naval forces operating out of the island of Malta sank 35 percent of the Axis supplies destined for North Africa in August. The amount increased to 38 percent in September and 63 percent in October. Rommel, who could not control the Italian Navy or Luftwaffe, could only send updates to Berlin and Rome about his deficiencies. Hitler began to take notice when reports of large Italian convoy losses reached Berlin during September and October. One of the most devastating occurred on 8-9 November, when a seven ship Italian convoy carrying 39,000 tons of supplies was destroyed. This nearly equaled the

[291]Young, *Rommel, The Desert Fox*, vi.

[292]Lewin, *Rommel as Military Commander*, 53-55.

amount of supplies that Rommel received during all of September and October. The Axis were menacing Egypt, but losing the war of logistics.[293]

Hitler ordered Grand-Admiral Karl Doenitz, Commander-in-Chief of U-boats, to reposition German submarines and minesweepers during September and October to help shift the balance of power into the Mediterranean, away from the British. Although Doenitz argued that this move would weaken Atlantic submarine capability, Hitler was pleased with the initial successes in November and December 1941, of sinking the British aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* near Gibraltar, and the cruiser *Galatea* near Alexandria, Egypt. To add additional combat power, Hitler moved the 2nd Air Fleet from Russia to Italy and appointed Field Marshal Albert Kesselring Commander-in-Chief South. Rommel's operations now absorbed resources from the German Army, Air Force and Navy. The war in Europe was already overstretching German Military resources, Rommel's insistence for additional support made the situation worse.[294]

Nonetheless, intervention from Berlin came too late to help Rommel. The Allied Forces began Operation CRUSADER on 18 November 1941. Rommel had reports of a pending British offensive, but at the time focused his units for another attack against Tobruk. Auchinleck employed a force that had been reinforced with 300 British Cruiser tanks, 300 American Stuart tanks, and over 600 pieces of artillery. The British had also used the past few months to build a railway and pipeline that brought water from

[293]Mitcham, *Triumphant Fox*, 134-35.

[294]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 136-39.

Alexandria. In late September, Auchinleck created the Eighth Army under General Sir Alan Cunningham to better manage his forces.[295]

Axis units were prepared to meet the British offensive. A significant battle was fought in the opening days of December in the desert east of Tobruk. Although Allied assaults were made piecemeal and were only partially effective, German units could ill afford losses in armor and material. Thus, the siege of Tobruk was abandoned on the night of 4-5 December. By

7 December the Axis had suffered losses of over 30 percent.[296] Kesselring visited Rommel in an attempt to bolster his spirits, but Luftwaffe aircraft ordered to Italy were not yet prepared to contest British air superiority over Libya. By New Year's Eve 1941, Rommel had relinquished control of Cyrenaica and fell back to defensive positions near El Aghella, not far from where his forces had begun operations nine months earlier.[297]

Rommel's preference for commanding his units at the front came with certain risks. The situation outside Tobruk highlights the best example of a subordinate exercising disciplined initiative of the campaign. Although Rommel did not generally care for staff officers, they had immense responsibilities. Yet, because Rommel focused on commanding at the front, his staff was frequently left without clear instructions or intent for upcoming operations. Rommel repeatedly left his headquarters without explanation and remained gone for days. For example, outside of Tobruk in November 1941, in preparation for an attack, Rommel remained at the front lines and gave modified

[295]Ibid., 148-49.

[296]Mitcham, *Rommel's Greatest Victory*, 20-21.

[297]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 174-78.

attack orders directly to his division commanders. However, he did so without notifying his headquarters to ensure awareness of the modified attack plan. The senior leader at Rommel's Headquarters was his operations officer, Lieutenant Colonel Siegfried Westphal. Having been out of contact with Rommel for days, he was forced to make excuses to Berlin concerning Rommel's whereabouts.[298] Westphal consolidated reports of British strength outside Tobruk without knowledge of Rommel's changed intent. These reports confirmed that British strongpoints were located precisely where Rommel's original attack was attempting to penetrate. In response, Westphal countermanded all attack orders to the divisions. Although furious when he found out, Rommel recognized his failure to provide updated commander's intent and ultimately commended Westphal by saying, "You did right. I am very grateful to you."[299] Although this event caused a delay in operations, Westphal's actions show the confusion that can be caused when a commander's intent is not universally known.

The logistics struggle again took center stage as Rommel worked to strengthen his defenses in western Libya. Hitler's decision to apply pressure on British control of the Mediterranean with U-boats and the Luftwaffe began to pay dividends. An Italian convoy successfully reached Tripoli on 5 January carrying 55 tanks and 20 armored cars, plus anti-tank guns, and other supplies. These boosted morale for units that had been occupying a defensive perimeter with damaged and unserviceable equipment. The 7

[298]Ibid., 127.

[299]Young, *Rommel, The Desert Fox*, 92-93.

December 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor also affected British requirements and caused the withdrawal of three full divisions for operations in Burma and the Pacific.[300]

After discussions with his staff and Berlin, Rommel decided that he had an opportunity to strike. His troops had used the weeks to recover and refit for offensive operations. From intelligence assessments and reconnaissance, Rommel knew the Axis had a numerical advantage over the British in western Cyrenaica. Although British reserves might restore the superiority to the British, Rommel was determined to regain his lost territory.[301]

Rommel's attack into Cyrenaica on 21 January 1942 again caught the British by surprise. They incorrectly believed it would take further weeks of logistics preparation for an attack, once again underestimating Rommel's offensive spirit. Agedabia fell on 24 January and the British once again prepared to abandon Benghazi. Because Rommel had maintained secrecy, the Axis leadership was as surprised as the Allies. Rommel's offensive prompted a visit from Kesselring and Marshal Ugo Cavallero, the Chief of the Italian Supreme Command, to his headquarters on 23 January with orders from Mussolini to immediately end the offensive.[302]

Although Rommel had disagreed with his Italian superiors about the conduct of the retreat during Operation CRUSADER, his boldness in January 1942 far exceeded previous actions. Rommel's initiative had transformed into insubordination as he disregarded Italian orders to stop the offensive. Rommel decided to continue his

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[300]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 180-81.

[301]Behrendt, *Rommel's Intelligence*, 132-34.

[302]Mitcham, *Triumphant Fox*, 28-29.

offensive regardless of orders and declared, "Only the *Fuehrer* can make me change my mind."[303] This not only strained the relationship with his Italian counterparts and Kesselring, but it compromised future trust and teambuilding within the Axis Coalition. Rommel seemed to be fighting for his own goals of ambition, entirely separate from the objectives of the Axis high command. The use of disciplined initiative is meant to allow action within the scope of a commander's intent. Rommel's actions, while audacious, were in conflict with the intent of Rome and Berlin and therefore contrary to the mission command principle. In response, Cavallero attempted to exert his authority over Rommel and withheld a portion of the Italian units for the upcoming attack. However imperiled the relationship became with his partners, Rommel assumed correctly: in the eyes of the *Fuehrer*, tactical success would remedy nearly any wrongdoing. Rommel was vindicated when, as a sign of approval, Hitler promoted him to Colonel General on 24 January. Rommel had again been rewarded for disregarding Italian orders and not building cohesive teams.[304]

Benghazi fell into Axis hands on 29 January. However, Italian concern over inadequate supplies was realized as the advance continued into Cyrenaica. Although British stores became a convenient German luxury, they were insufficient to propel Rommel's forces past Benghazi. Rommel halted his offensive until he could supply his advance. During this time senior leaders in Berlin and Italy planned a combined air and ground attack on the island of Malta for July 1942. Shortages in German and Italian parachute forces and air transport ultimately prevented a ground invasion. Although

[303]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 191-92.

[304]Showalter, *Patton and Rommel*, 260-61.

continued bombing during late March 1942 limited British Naval and Air efforts in the short term, the inability to seize the island meant continued hazards for Axis Naval convoys in the Mediterranean.[305]

Rommel held a "training and study session" on 12 May for all Division Commanders in order to clearly lay out his priorities for the upcoming attack against Tobruk.[306] The mission was to defeat the British along the Gazala Line west of Tobruk and then, seize Tobruk itself. Rommel's plan showed similarities to Jackson and Ewell's advance on Winchester—he would break his army into two wings. The plan was bold, and assumed the British would remain stationary. The northern wing under General Ludwig Cruewell, Commander of the Afrika Korps, would act as a fixing force and conduct a feint while the southern wing wheeled and maneuvered behind British positions to take Tobruk from the southeast. Although the northern wing consisted primarily of the Italian XXI Corps, Rommel directed Cruewell as his most senior leader to lead the attack. Rommel would not delegate the decisive effort—he would lead the southern wing himself.[307]

The attack commenced on the afternoon of 26 May 1942. The British were postured in brigade size defensive boxes that were formidable, but could not be easily reinforced. Rommel's decision to assign Cruewell to command the northern wing away from his organic command seems divergent from standard command and control

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[305]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 203-05.

[306]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 312-13.

[307]Ward Rutherford, *The Biography of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel* (London: Bison Books, 1981), 98-99.

methods. Although it is clear that Rommel's strained relationship with the Italians prevented him from delegating authority in this attack, his decision to task the Afrika Korps Commander away from his command would cause unintended results when Cruewell was captured on 29 May 1942.

Throughout the Battle of Gazala, Rommel maintained his frontline presence, remaining with the southern wing and frequently being so close to the front that his headquarters element came into direct enemy contact. Additionally, following days of indecisive fighting with British strongpoints west of Tobruk, Rommel personally led an initial attack on 1-2 June 1942 against the stubborn defenses of Bir Hacheim, defended by the 1st Free French Brigade. Rommel's attack on Bir Hacheim is the most definitive example in the campaign of actions that are contrary to the mission command philosophy of decentralized control. After numerous unsuccessful assaults, Rommel became so fixated on this area that he began personally shuffling battalion and brigade sized elements from within units of the Afrika Korps to support attacks by the 90th Light Division.[308]

Rommel writes, "I frequently took over command of the assault forces myself and seldom in Africa was I given such a hard-fought struggle.[309] In one instance Rommel cobbled together a number of Engineer Battalions commanded by his own Engineer Officer, Colonel Hans Hecker and gave him orders to break through the obstacles outside of Bir Hacheim on the night of 8 June. It seems as though Rommel should have prevented himself from directly managing a small tactical action against one stubborn

[308]Carell, *The Foxes of the Desert*, 175-78.

[309]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 213-15.

enemy brigade. He could have easily given his commander's intent and encouraged the disciplined initiative of General Ulrich Kleemann, Commander of the 90th Light Division, or any Division Commander in the Afrika Korps to seize Bir Hacheim successfully.[310]

Although Rommel was determined to achieve success outside Tobruk, his front line tactical actions appear in line with that of a much junior officer and seem overly focused on one small sector of the battlefield. According to his own account he was directly managing battalion and brigade sized formations throughout June 1942, clearly defying to both *Auftragstaktik* and mission command philosophy. Just as Rommel took personal command of a battalion during Meuse River crossing, and delivered fuel cans to front line units, he again showed his inclination to directly control minor tactical actions and micromanage subordinates. Although it seems apparent that Rommel may have neglected some of his larger operational responsibilities, Bir Hacheim fell on 11 June 1942.[311] Following Axis success against the strongpoints at Bir Hacheim, Knightsbridge and Sidi Rezegh, the British Gazala Line gave way. With the Eighth Army soon in full retreat, Rommel refocused his combat power on his next objective. He redirected his armored columns north and broke through the thin defensive line. Tobruk fell into Axis hands on 21 June 1942, with the surrender of over 30,000 Allied troops.[312]

As with Westphal's initiative outside Tobruk, key staff officers exercised disciplined initiative in support of their commander. Another example occurred following

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[310]Mitcham, *Rommel's Greatest Victory*, 113-16.

[311]Carell, *The Foxes of the Desert*, 178-79.

[312]Ibid., 159-161, 198-99.

Cruewell's capture on 29 May 1942. Upon receiving news of this at Afrika Korps Headquarters, Mellenthin, Cruewell's Operations Officer, assessed that the northern wing of the attack was in peril. Mellenthin had served directly under Rommel in the fall of 1941 and was no doubt aware of his desire for decisive action from staff officers. Mellenthin took an unorthodox step: he asked Kesselring, visiting Africa, to take command of the northern wing forces. Although a Luftwaffe Officer, and Rommel's nominal superior, Kesselring accepted, and the momentum of the attack was maintained. Kesselring described the event by saying, "On insistence from many quarters I agreed to take over front-line command, as Major von Mellenthin, Cruewell's operations chief, could not accept the responsibility and no suitable army commander could be released."[313] Although this event could not have been forecasted in Cruewell's operational plan, it seems clear that Mellenthin understood Cruewell's intent and that the right wing required someone to command it effectively. This event emphasizes the importance of both understanding the commander's intent and the willingness to exercise disciplined initiative on its behalf.

The capture of Tobruk not only marked a psychological milestone for Rommel's forces because of their repulse in December 1941, it also provided vital access to port facilities and large stores of Allied fuel, food, and equipment.[314] Rommel rejoiced and issued the following message to his victorious soldiers on the day they captured Tobruk, "Soldiers of the Panzer Army Afrika! Now we must assure the complete destruction of the enemy. We will not rest until we have shattered the last remnants of the British

[313]Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field Marshal Kesselring*, 126.

[314]Mitcham, *Rommel's Greatest Victory*, 128-44.

Eighth Army. During the days to come, I shall call on you for one more great effort to bring us to this final goal."[315]

His Panzer Army was again moving east on 22 June. A wireless message arrived from Berlin the same day. For his capture of Tobruk, Hitler had promoted Rommel to Field Marshal. Rommel's pragmatic spirit led him to comment to his wife, "I would rather that he would have given me one more division."[316] As Rommel continued east, many senior Axis leaders believed he should stop and refit his exhausted forces. Rommel desired, however, to deliver a final decisive stroke against the Allied Forces. Promotion only encouraged Rommel and seems likely to have ensured continued defiance of his Italian superiors. Although Hitler received dissenting counsel from top aides, he continued to support Rommel. Kesselring spoke of the continued movement following Tobruk by saying, "I should furthermore have known that Rommel cannot be bridled once he smells victory."[317]

Concern turned to panic in Cairo as British staff officers began burning documents in preparation for a hasty evacuation. To complicate matters, the Egyptian Government under King Farouk was known to be pro-German and never declared war against the Axis. During the first days of July, both Berlin and Rome prematurely issued political declarations about Egypt's imminent "liberation." The British Eighth Army, meanwhile, retreated east and looked for a final line of defense. Some British leaders favored a defense centered near the Suez Canal, believing the situation too desperate to

[315]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 232.

[316]Ibid.

[317]Jon Latimer, *Alamein* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 53.

warrant further resistance in the open desert.[318] Auchinleck thought otherwise. He gave orders to prepare a defensive line near the 150 mile wide Qattara Depression which made flanking maneuvers difficult and canalized movement along the coast road. Auchinleck's last attempt at saving the Suez Canal would be a thin line of exhausted troops near an insignificant railroad station named El Alamein.[319]

Rommel's estranged relationship with Kesselring and senior Italian officials made cohesive teambuilding with them nearly impossible. Rommel had already shown he did not follow orders which he disagreed with and had been rewarded by Hitler for past insubordination. Rommel was disappointed with the logistic support of his Italian units and unimpressed with the decisions in Rome. With the rank of Field Marshal and permission from Hitler to continue his offensive, he would rely on victories in Egypt to build cohesive teams within his North African Coalition.[320]

Rommel attacked British defenses on 1 July 1942. Fighting continued for two days, resulting in heavy German losses at the hands of British mobile groups and Allied airpower.[321] Panzer Army Afrika finally ground to a halt during the night of 2-3 July. Continuous fighting had left units with little remaining combat power. The Afrika Korps had only 36 operational tanks left. Although localized attacks were conducted during the following week, Rommel's forces were unsuccessful in seizing key terrain. Many Italian

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[318]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 257-58.

[319]Fritz Bayerlein, "El Alamein," in *Fatal Decisions*, ed. Seymour Friedin and William Richardson (New York: William Sloane Associated, 1956), 123.

[320]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 273-76.

[321]Latimer, *Alamein*, 58-61.

units had long since reached their culmination point and Rommel criticized them for not continuing to fight. Mussolini, however, insisted on giving his units time to rest and refit. Yet, at this point in the battle, the initiative resided in the hands of "The Auk." Rommel and the Axis Forces had reached their high water mark in Egypt.[322]

Although Rommel's forces were damaged, they maintained advantages in their weapons capabilities. A British attack on 21 July, by the 2nd New Zealand Division resulted in the loss of 118 Allied tanks and 1,400 prisoners, while showing Rommel's soldiers they could not be easily defeated. Both Berlin and Rome sent orders to Rommel not to retreat.[323] Although he obeyed, his units were near disintegration due to logistical shortages. The Allies had only 50 to 100 miles to travel from their rear area, and received significant shipments of material from Syria, India, and Iraq. In contrast, Rommel's troops had been pushed past the point of culmination; desperate calls for reinforcements were answered only with the cobbled together 164th Light Afrikan Division and a single German Parachute Brigade. Both units were desperately short of transport.[324]

Despite Auchinleck's success halting Rommel, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill visited North Africa in August and changed Allied leadership. He appointed General Harold Alexander as the new Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Forces, while General Bernard Montgomery became Eighth Army Commander on 13 August. On the night of 31 August, Rommel attempted one last attack to isolate Alam Halfa ridge and destroy Allied positions from the rear. His operational plan was very similar to the attack

[322]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 261-63.

[323]Ibid., 268-269.

[324]Carell, *The Foxes of the Desert*, 248-49.

against the Gazala Line. His left wing, anchored to the coastal road, included three Italian Divisions and the 164th Afrikan Division, would conduct a diversionary attack aimed at preventing the British from reinforcing south. The right wing consisted of all three divisions of the Afrika Korps reinforced by three divisions of the XX Italian Corps. The northern wing attacked while the Afrika Korps attempted to severe British lines in the south.[325]

Due in large part to information about Rommel's intentions from ULTRA intercepts, Montgomery was able to parry all of Rommel's offensive movements. Although unaware of the impeccable Allied intelligence, Rommel's limited offensive power left him without a successful attack option. Rommel personally travelled with his decisive effort, the Afrika Korps. Although Rommel had confidence in his subordinate leaders, shortly after the attack began the Commander of the Afrika Korps, General Walther Nehring was wounded and replaced by his Chief of Staff, Bayerlein. Additionally, General Georg von Bismarck, the Commander of the 21st Panzer Division, was killed by a mortar round. Just as the fight began Rommel had lost two trusted commanders in his main attack formations. Although the lead panzer formations made it to the outskirts of Alam Halfa ridge, they were repulsed by integrated anti-tank defenses of the British 44th Division. Rommel called off the attack on 1 September.[326]

This paved the way for a British counterattack on 23 October. Montgomery had focused heavily on realistic live fire training exercises and implemented new procedures

[325]Montgomery, *Montgomery and the Eighth Army*, 22.

[326]Fraser, *Knight's Cross*, 355-59.

to safeguard information.[327] He prepared for a lengthy fight to expel Rommel from Egypt. His attack began with a massive artillery barrage that underlined Allied superiority in firepower and logistics. Following the initial bombardment, 700 British tanks attacked Rommel's northern flank. In heavy fighting throughout the last days of October, the Axis Forces held their defensive line together.[328]

As November 1942 dawned, a flurry of message traffic with Hitler severely confused the situation and caused panic in the increasingly demoralized Panzer Army. Rommel sent an update on his situation outside El Alamein to Hitler on 2 November 1942. The report discussed the possibility of abandoning the position at El Alamein. Rommel's Headquarters received a message from Hitler on 3 November that appeared to be in response to Rommel's note the previous day. Hitler's orders were clear. The last line of his message read, "No other path lies open to your troops except victory or death."[329]

With orders in hand, Rommel now required the support of his trusted subordinates to help save his army from destruction. Although strained relations persisted within coalition leadership, mutual trust and cohesive teams remained amongst German officers. Rommel turned to these trusted staff officers for counsel and assistance. He openly discussed the validity of Hitler's order and its implications with his Operations Officer Westphal. The fact that Rommel had such a candid discussion with a subordinate showed a high level of trust and confidence in his staff. Although Rommel obeyed the order, it

[327]Montgomery, *Montgomery and the Eighth Army*, 36-41.

[328]Bayerlein, "El Alamein," 103-16.

[329]Carell, *The Foxes of the Desert*, 294.

was later revoked by Hitler as it was sent prior to reading Rommel's 2 November update.[330]

Rommel relied on mutual trust and confidence of another officer during the retreat from El Alamein. In the chaos surrounding Hitler's "victory or death" order, the Commander of the Afrika Korps, General Wilhelm Ritter von Thoma, was captured while attempting to defeat a British attack. In an attempt to save his beloved Afrika Korps, Rommel visited their headquarters and conveyed his intent for a general retreat to the Chief of Staff, Bayerlein. Bayerlein was a trusted and competent leader that had served in North Africa since November 1941, had been awarded the Knight's Cross in December 1941, and had temporarily commanded the Afrika Korps only a few months prior. Rommel conveyed his explicit trust and confidence by saying, "Colonel Bayerlein. I am putting you in command of the Afrika Korps. There's no one else to whom I can entrust it. And if it should happen later on that the *Fuehrer* courts-martials us for our disobedience, we'll both have to answer squarely for our decision today. Do your duty as best you can. All your orders to the troops carry my authority."[331] Rommel's actions in both cases showed his reliance on mutual trust during one of the most difficult episodes of the campaign.

Having finally received approval from Hitler, Rommel's forces began their retreat on

4 November 1942. Rommel gave his orders with only general guidance for the retreat knowing many units were without proper transportation or resupply capabilities. It was

[330]Ibid., 294-95.

[331]Bayerlein, "El Alamein," 123.

impossible to expect orderly and controlled movements—that time had passed for his army. Units would execute the retreat as best they could with whatever vehicles they had or could commandeer. Much of the Italian Infantry and German Parachute Brigade began the retreat on foot with little hope of success. Rommel assigned a rear guard to screen against British encirclement attempts, but nearly all the Italian Infantry was captured within a few days.[332]

Even units with transport presented a panicked spectacle as Rommel wrote, "Conditions on the road were indescribable. Columns in complete disorder—partly of German, partly of Italian vehicles—choked the road between the minefields. Rarely was there any movement forward and then everything soon jammed up again."[333] News of the Allied invasion of North Africa as part of Operation TORCH on 8 November added to the confusion of the retreat. Hitler's ability to convince Vichy French leaders to formally join the Axis Powers was disintegrating.[334]

Hitler responded to news of the Allied landings by ordering Kesselring to redeploy all available forces in the Mediterranean to Tunisia, to maintain a foothold and wait for armored forces to arrive to reinforce their position. Kesselring assembled an ad hoc force consisting of two parachute regiments, some anti-aircraft troops, and a number of German Afrika replacement battalions that were organized for administrative purposes only. Units in Europe such as the 10th Panzer, 320th Infantry, and Italian *Superga*

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[332]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 337-38.

[333]Ibid., 340.

[334]Carell, *The Foxes of the Desert*, 315-17.

Division would also deploy to defend Tunisia. In total, the force shipped to Tunisia to stabilize the situation was less than 10,000 men.[335]

Meanwhile, over 2,000 miles to the northeast, the German Sixth Army was experiencing heavy fighting and logistical and manpower issues outside Stalingrad. Many units were being decimated and in danger of encirclement as Rommel retreated from Egypt.[336] On the Western Front, the end of 1942 also saw an increase in the Allied bombing offensive with the introduction of the four engine bomber, radio navigation aids, and incendiary bombs. By December 1942, Allied bombing raids were nearly reaching Germany proper and devastating German industrial capability in the Ruhr district.[337]

Rommel left his troops and visited Hitler on 28 November. For the first time the atmosphere was tense and the conversation cold and distant. Hitler was unaccepting of the possibility of Rommel's further defeat. The meeting ended with little tangible result, though, Hitler attempted to bolster the Axis position in North Africa by establishing the 5th Panzer Army on 10 December 1942, under the command of General Hans-Jurgen von Arnim. This formation began the defense of Tunisia prior to the arrival of Rommel's forces.[338] During 16-17 December, remnants of Rommel's forces moved west through the Sirte region of Libya. They were now just over 200 miles from Tripoli and less than

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[335]Douglas E. Nash, "Rommel's Lost Battalions," *Army History* 84 (Summer 2012): 7-24.

[336]Reuth, *Rommel: The End of a Legend*, 56-57.

[337]Christopher R. Gabel, "The Combined Bomber Offensive, 1943," *Military Review* 73 (June 1993); reprinted in U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, *H200 Book of Readings* (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, October 2012), 456-57.

[338]Lewin, *Rommel as Military Commander*, 193-94.

300 miles from Tunisia. Rommel ordered his forces not to become decisively engaged with the British. Attempts to resupply his army remained under way. However, nine out of ten ships destined for Tripoli were sunk, and the one that did reach its destination did not contain fuel.[339] Montgomery's methodical advance from Egypt and employment of the new Sherman tank guaranteed that rear guard actions were vicious and unceasing.[340]

Tripoli fell to the British Eighth Army on 23 January 1943. Two days later Rommel moved his headquarters into Tunisia. The rear guard of the 15th Panzer Division finally limped into Tunisia on 15 February. In addition to over 1,000 miles of territory, the retreat had cost the Axis over 55,000 casualties (of which 30,000 were prisoners), 450 tanks, and 1,000 guns.[341] Although Rommel was relieved the retreat was over, American columns in western Tunisia were gaining strength. Elements of the 5th Panzer Army had their first serious clash with lead units of the 1st U.S. Armored Division in the last days of January 1942. Allied losses to German anti-tank screens were initially high during the February battles of Kasserine Pass.[342]

To address coordination problems arising from the existence of two separate Panzer armies in Tunisia, Rommel was promoted to command of Army Group Afrika on 23 February 1943. Rommel remained subordinate to Kesselring who retained his position as Commander-in-Chief South. Although he initially refused the promotion, he knew that consolidation would strengthen the defense in Tunisia. However, it was too little too late.

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[339]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 375-76.

[340]Montgomery, *Montgomery and the Eighth Army*, 26-27.

[341]Latimer, *Alamein*, 311-12.

[342]Lewin, *Rommel as Military Commander*, 197-203.

The remaining Axis units would soon be fighting two converging Allied Armies without adequate logistical support. In addition, Rommel had been fighting in North Africa for over two years and was beginning to experience health problems. Although he had taken short leaves during his tour, none had been of the length required for proper healing or recovery. On 9 March 1943, Rommel left Tunisia in a last attempt to discuss the details of the situation with Hitler.[343]

Rommel's accomplishments from 1941 to 1943 overshadowed his insubordination and inability to build cohesive teams within his coalition. Upon his departure, though, Kesselring said, "I was glad to be able to recommend him for the Knight's Cross with diamonds."[344] Even in the last hours Rommel attempted to receive permission from Hitler to relocate his troops from Tunisia to Italy for recovery and refit. His request to relocate was not accepted. Rommel would not set foot on African soil again. Hitler quietly ordered him to take leave to improve his health. The remaining Axis Forces in Tunisia surrendered on 6 May. Rommel reflected on the event by saying, "Terrible as it was to know that all my men had found their way into Anglo-American prison camps, even more shattering was the realization that our star was in decline and the knowledge of how little our command measured up to the trials which lay ahead."[345]

Rommel's North Africa Campaign had spanned more than two years, covered three countries, and crossed thousands of miles of open desert. Rommel had begun fighting the British and ended fighting the combined British-American Coalition.

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[343]Ibid., 208-09.

[344]Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field Marshal Kesselring*, 152.

[345]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 422.

Rommel had gained early successes as he had during World War I and France in 1940; he used initiative and led his units personally from the front. In North Africa he had gathered proven leaders to command his formations, and personally issued his orders to ensure his intent was clear to his subordinates.[346]

However, Rommel's ambitious exploits were not without fault. He frequently micromanaged his subordinate leaders and became fixated on tactical actions, compromising his ability to effectively control operational decisions. Additionally, his operations frequently disregarded orders from Rome and Berlin, which compromised trust and cohesion within the German-Italian Coalition. Rommel's exploits highlight that not all initiative is disciplined initiative, and actions executed outside of the superior's intent can jeopardize larger successes. His use of undisciplined initiative during the first two offensives into Cyrenaica was contrary to German national goals, highlighting the potential for misapplication of mission command principles during decentralized operations. Although successful in the short term, Rommel's disregard or inability to understand the larger German strategy in Europe led him to siphon vital men and resources from the decisive operation against the Soviet Union. Ultimately, Rommel left North Africa without anything tangible to show for his years of struggle.[347]

[346]Widder, "*Auftragstaktik*," H501RA-2.

[347]Young, *Rommel, The Desert Fox*, 65.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Separated by nearly 80 years, the Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862 and North Africa Campaign of 1941 to 43 have both similarities and differences relating to their use of mission command principles. Both were dynamic campaigns of maneuver in secondary theaters where the styles of command are of interest to professional officers. Although they took place on either side of World War I, and are divided by doctrine and culture, both commanders faced unique obstacles in their respective campaigns. The requirement to balance control and delegation on a dynamic battlefield remained a challenge for both commanders. Their use of mission command principles in varying degrees during different situations supported both victory and success. Ultimately, their campaigns highlight that while mission command principles are not a guaranteed formula to ensure victory, they are building blocks that can increase intangible factors and assist in setting the conditions for successful operations.[348]

In examining the usage of the three specified mission command principles, there are a few obvious conclusions. Jackson's inability to provide orders or commander's intent to subordinates during both the Romney Expedition and Battle of Kernstown led to disagreement and conflict with Loring and Garnett. While this seems an obvious mistake under current military framework, Jackson's understandable preference for direct control after Harpers Ferry and Kernstown led him to make this mistake. This error can also be partially explained by the contemporary military culture of this period, as issuing formal

[348]Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, 1-3.

orders only became an expectation once functional staffs were integrated into the professional force in the late nineteenth century. The immediate tactical failure of Jackson's efforts at Romney and Kernstown can be attributed to Jackson's singular failure to properly analyze the situation and plan for contingencies.[349]

Rommel, as a product of the German *Auftragstaktik* culture, was well aware of the importance of issuing orders and commander's intent directly to his subordinates. He routinely did so in person throughout his campaign to ensure mutual understanding. However, Rommel's actions led to different failures concerning his commander's intent. Because of his preference for front line leadership, Rommel discovered that the understanding of his intent could be limited to unit commanders, but must also be articulated to his headquarters. Rommel's inability to maintain contact with his headquarters and provide his intent during both the French Campaign and during the Battle of Tobruk, neglected his responsibility to provide his headquarters with sufficient information to conduct operational synchronization. Failure to provide commander's intent to headquarters personnel resulted in capable staff officers, like Lieutenant. Colonel Westphal, making initiative based decisions in an attempt to maintain control. As an operational leader, Rommel had the responsibility for more than just the front line; he had to use the tools available to balance control of both the tactical and operational objectives.[350]

For modern operations, these examples highlight the importance of issuing orders to commanders and staffs, and the need to disseminate changes as well. Not only is it

[349]Jackson's Official Report of Kernstown, 9 April 1862, *OR*, 12(1): 382.

[350]Behrendt, *Rommel's Intelligence*, 132-34.

important for ensuring shared understanding, it also allows for informed decisions in the commander's absence. Additionally, when commander's guidance and intent change, it is vital to communicate any changes or deviations to anyone that may be affected. On the current battlefield, ensuring that tactical operation centers, as well as higher headquarters, adjacent units, and other partners are contacted to ensure dissemination is vital for success.

The ability to build cohesive teams within an organization facilitates mutual trust and enables future success. During Jackson's early actions, his inability to build cohesion and foster mutual trust with subordinates was clear. Jackson's solitary nature and regimented lifestyle contributed to his lack of social skills when dealing with subordinates. This lack of teambuilding and trust ultimately became a contributing factor to the grievances filed by Loring's Brigade and led to Jackson's attempted resignation in January 1861. Had Jackson fostered a personal relationship with Loring and Garnett, the potential for tension would have been mitigated. Later in the campaign, Jackson altered his leadership style and began building trust and fostering personal relationships with Ewell and Lee. These improved understanding and communication between Jackson and Ewell, beginning in the weeks prior to the Battle of Front Royal. It is clear that these relationships fostered mutual trust and set conditions that allowed mission success during the second half of the Valley Campaign.[351]

As a career Army Officer, Rommel clearly embraced the task of building cohesive teams, at least within the German organizations, from the onset of the North Africa Campaign. His transfer of trusted officers to lead his ranks shows the importance

[351]Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 164.

he placed on teambuilding and cohesive teams. Rommel's dedication to teambuilding is also evident in the meeting with all the officers of the Panzer Regiment of the 5th Light Division in Tripoli, in March 1941. This meeting allowed Rommel to build mutual trust within the leadership of an important unit of his growing force, while also ensuring that they understood his intent.[352]

However, Rommel's failure to build mutual trust with his Italian partners led to strained relations throughout the campaign. Although he reported directly to the Italians, Rommel's frustration with Italian capability and attitudes causes him to disregard orders from the Italian leadership and Rome. His actions not only caused friction with his Italian superiors, but also led him to circumvent the German-Italian chain of command and force leaders in Berlin to be engaged with these issues in North Africa. Although the Italians may not have impressed Rommel professionally, had he managed the relationship more carefully, he may have leveraged this relationship for additional assets and logistical support from his Italian partners.[353]

The value of teambuilding and developing mutual trust has been evident for centuries. Teambuilding and personal relationships not only increase familiarity, but also assist subordinates in understanding the commander's thought process. The importance of mutual trust and personal relationships within modern military units is recognized in many forms. It is frequently initiated through social events and unit gatherings, but also takes place during unit training and operational deployments. Regardless of the venue used to build cohesive teams and foster mutual trust, their importance remains relevant to

[352]Schmidt, *With Rommel in the Desert*, 13-14.

[353]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 64-66.

the execution of decentralized operations at all levels. There is also a lesson concerning coalition warfare. It seems apparent that the principles of mission command apply equally to units from both national and international perspectives. The mutual trust and teambuilding outlined in mission command principles would be beneficial in the current operating environment when working with any domestic or foreign governments or with civilian agencies supporting operations.

The ability of any leader to exercise disciplined initiative and encourage its use in subordinates is difficult to develop. Jackson personally used disciplined initiative throughout the planning and execution of his campaign. However, due to his strict and regimented style of leadership, he was initially unsupportive of its early use by his subordinates. Jackson's interaction with Garnett for his retreat at Kernstown is the best example of this disapproval. However, following the incident with Garnett, Jackson seems to have begun to understand the benefits that came from allowing subordinates initiative. Jackson's leadership change toward encouraging decentralized decisions is best evidenced by his orders to Ewell outside Winchester with a note that read simply, "Attack at daylight."[354]

Although similar in some respects, Rommel's use of initiative was significantly different than that of Jackson. Unlike Jackson, Rommel valued initiative in his subordinates during his entire campaign. However, he failed to understand the marked difference between initiative and disciplined initiative. The principle of disciplined initiative advocates actions that achieve the higher commander's intent when orders no longer fit the situation. It authorizes limited action to take advantage of opportunities, but

[354]Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 444-45.

these actions must fit inside the larger framework of the higher commander's intent. Rommel frequently far exceeded this. Rommel's offensives into eastern Libya during March 1941 and later in January 1942 exceeded the intent given from Rome and Berlin. By willingly disregarding these, his initiative was aimed at goals outside the scope of Hitler's intent and therefore contrary to the use of disciplined initiative advocated in mission command philosophy.[355]

Additionally, although Rommel encourages initiative of his subordinates, his actions often prevented this from occurring. Rommel's inclination for remaining at the front created situations that precluded initiative, whether disciplined or undisciplined, from being exercised. Rommel's efforts to personally gather and deliver fuel in April 1941 seemed representative of his tendency toward micromanagement, which is contrary to mission command philosophy. This was again evident in his direction of battalion sized elements during the attack on Bir Hacheim during June 1942. Rommel's fixation on a single British defensive position no doubt discouraged the division and brigade commanders from exercising disciplined initiative, and instead encouraged them to wait for detailed orders from the army commander personally directing the action.[356]

Additionally, Rommel's inability to fully comprehend the larger German strategic objectives for Europe resulted in his pulling resources to North Africa that drained reserves from the war against the Soviet Union. Rommel's lack of strategic understanding and single mindedness are best shown with his promotion to Field Marshal

[355]Kitchen, *Rommel's Desert War*, 191-92.

[356]Carell, *The Foxes of the Desert*, 175-78.

after the capture of Tobruk when he commented to his wife, "I would rather that he [Hitler] would have given me one more division."[357]

Current military leaders need to understand and embrace the marked difference between initiative and disciplined initiative. Although there is often not an adequate emphasis placed on the differences, when training and mentoring junior leaders on the principles of mission command, the variance is paramount. Failure of subordinates to understand the need for disciplined initiative will leave them without the tools necessary to make effective decisions and can lead them to unknowingly work against the larger objectives of the organization. Leaders who train their subordinates to understand the limits of disciplined initiative and encourage its use will effectively prepare leaders to conduct decentralized operations on the modern battlefield. Leaders also need to comprehend that although the use of initiative is important, the actions of the commander are also important to set the conditions for its use. Leaders need to be aware, though, that excessive senior leader oversight can effectively serve to prevent initiative in any form.[358]

Although mission command principles are intended to function as building blocks for tactical and operational level success, their use does not guarantee strategic victory. Jackson used many mission command principles that assisted him in achieving victories at Front Royal, Winchester, Port Republic, and Cross Keys. These victories achieved strategic objectives by causing Lincoln to hold McDowell's 40,000 man corps at Fredericksburg which denied reinforcements to McClellan who was endangering

[357]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 232.

[358]Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, v.

Richmond from the peninsula.[359] However, while Rommel selected trusted leaders and issued orders that lead to tactical victories in the short term, his territorial gains were lost without achieving any tangible benefit in support of Germany's larger strategy. The best example of his lack of understanding is Rommel's desire to capture the Suez Canal in April 1941. The resources required to garrison and defend the Suez Canal make any strategic advantages of this success unclear and highlight Rommel's narrow strategic vision.[360]

Both campaigns show clear evidence that the use of mission command principles can foster decentralized decision making by subordinates and ultimately assist in setting the conditions for success. Jackson's and Rommel's use of mission command elements created circumstances and events that both allowed and prevented effective command and control during their campaigns. While it is clear that the effective integration of mission command philosophy helps to set the conditions for successful operations, there remains no concrete combination of doctrine and leadership that guarantees success on the battlefield.

[359]Lincoln, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 5:235-36.

[360]Rommel, *The Rommel Papers*, 258-59.

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